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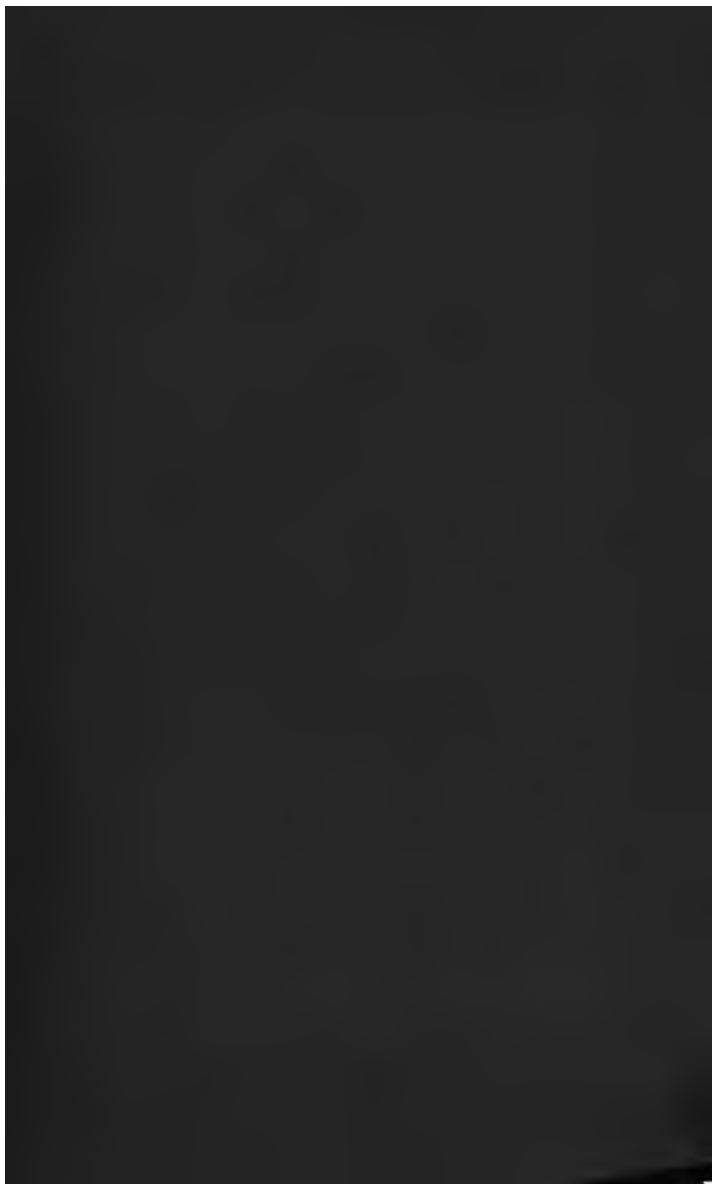
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A

PEEP AT THE PYRENEES.







A
PEEP AT THE PYRENEES.

BY A
PEDESTRIAN.

BEING A TOURIST'S NOTE-BOOK.

WITH



A MAP.



LONDON :
WHITTAKER & CO., AVE MARIA LANE.
1867.

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PREFACE.

THIS little book is compiled from notes taken during a walk through some portions of the Pyrenees in the early part of last summer. It does not profess to be an account of the inhabitants, towns, and life in the Pyrenees, as a work of that kind could only be produced after a prolonged residence in the country; but it is, as its title implies, merely a record of a short ramble through some of the prettier and more interesting spots in and around the Pyrenean district. The author's principal object in publishing this slight sketch is the hope that it may prove of some practical value to intending Tourists; and for this reason he has often been

compelled to enter into details which, although of great importance to the Pedestrian, will, it is feared, be sometimes irksome to the general reader.

London,
15th May 1867.

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A PEEP AT THE PYRENEES.



A TOURIST'S NOTE-BOOK.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION—LONDON TO BORDEAUX.

THE distance from London to Bordeaux is about six hundred miles, and may be traversed by express train in four-and-twenty hours. It is unnecessary for me to state by what class I travelled; suffice it to say I went by the cheapest and most direct route, getting over the ground as quickly as possible, although I was unable to take the mail trains, being neither a first- nor second-class passenger.

We (my fellow-traveller and myself) started from London on the evening of the 1st of June for Paris. At Boulogne, where we arrived at 2 A.M., we were fortunate enough to find the railway station open; and nobody being on guard, by the aid of a match we sought out the

first-class waiting-room, and enjoyed a comfortable nap on the velvet cushions. Staying a night in Paris to pay a hasty visit to the *Famille Bénoiton*, we arrived at Bordeaux within fifty hours of our departure from London.

The journey from Paris, although somewhat tedious, passed over more pleasantly than we had anticipated. We met with some very agreeable companions on the way, with whom we lost no opportunity of conversing, for the purpose of rubbing up our French. During the night one of the occupants of our carriage adopted an ingenious method for obtaining a comfortable sleeping position. He fixed a stout cord or rope across the carriage, at a height rather below his arms, and, placing a cloak on the same, improvised a capital support when leaning forward for his head and arms. By fastening two or three stout straps together we constructed a similar resting-place which proved to be a great success and quite free from vibration. Our rest was only once broken into, very early in the morning, by some peasants who were returning from a fête. They were inclined to be uproarious on entering the carriage; but, fortunately, they were rather tired and damp through waiting on an open platform in a drenching rain for a couple of

hours, and consequently too done up to make much noise.

Having decided upon making a vacation tour in a locality at a somewhat great distance from London, and with but a month's holiday at our disposal, it was necessary to pass rapidly to our destination, in order not to lose valuable time in stopping at places by the way. We were thus compelled to hasten past many interesting spots which we should otherwise have been only too glad to visit. Such towns as Orleans, Blois, Tours, and Poitiers are so celebrated in history, and sound so familiar to one's ears, that their names alone are sufficient to call up into our memories many glorious associations; and as the train rushes through the stations of these towns, our minds are filled with reminiscences of Edward III., the Black Prince, of King John of France, and Joan of Arc.

Notwithstanding the many inconveniences which we English find in the French railway system, there are several advantages which it possesses over our own. We may feel annoyed at the system of locking-up the passengers in a waiting-room, divided into a series of pens, until the actual starting of the train; and we may also disapprove of the manner of packing the carriages adopted by the guards, who evi-

dently prefer to leave a few carriages perfectly empty in order that the others may be well filled. The peremptory tone of the officials is sometimes grating to the ear, and their requests often sound very much like orders; but these little discomforts are more than counterbalanced by the advantages we enjoy. The arrangements respecting luggage, tickets, and refreshments are perfect; and, nobody but passengers and officials being allowed on the platform, the traffic regulations are conducted in a most orderly manner, and much unnecessary bustle and confusion avoided. There is another excellent arrangement in the French system which obviates a great deal of useless trouble. People are relieved of the duty of seeing one another off by train; and of all the worthless and stupid duties that we are at times compelled to perform, this is about the worst. At no time is a person so conscious of making himself look like a fool as when he is seeing a friend off at a railway station, excepting, perhaps, when he is being photographed. You accompany your friend to the platform, and stand talking with him on the step of the carriage. A porter comes along, shouting "Any more going on?", and locks the door. You shake hands, wish your friend a pleasant journey, and laughingly

express a hope that the train won't break down. The bell rings, you wave your hand, recede half-a-dozen paces, and remain looking on. After standing thus for some time, confident you are looking rather foolish, and that all the passengers are staring at you, and commenting in a by no means complimentary manner upon your personal appearance, you approach the carriage again with a confidential nod, as if you have something very important to communicate, and say, in a low tone, "I hope you'll get down all right." Your friend hopes so too. You say, jokingly, that you don't think there will be an accident. Your friend laughs, and says he thinks not either. The engine whistles, you draw back, once more waving your hand, but still the train doesn't move. After you have waited some time longer, your friend nodding approvingly all the time, and having exhausted all your conversation, not being able to think of anything more to say, except hoping that he'll get down all right and that there won't be an accident, which, having told him twice already, you think scarcely worth repeating, you become desperate. You pretend to be particularly interested in something or somebody close by, till you are quite sure the train is moving; and when it is well off you turn round

hastily, as if you had only just become aware of the fact, and shout a last good-bye.

Before arriving at Bordeaux, our first regular halting-place, I will briefly introduce myself and my plans.

I am a pedestrian in the fullest sense of the word. My knapsack, when full, weighs about 10 lbs., and my kit is composed as follows:—Oxford shooting-coat, tweed trousers and vest, a light-coloured alpaca coat, a pair of flannel trousers, two flannel shirts, a night-shirt, two pairs of woollen socks, collars, a few small stores, and a light pair of shoes, besides my clumped boots. The knapsack is waterproof, and provided with a wicker frame to keep it well off the back. When on the road I assume my alpaca coat on account of its lightness and not being so liable to become dusty, and pack the other coat in my knapsack. I do not carry a waterproof, as on a walking tour it is of very little service, and I have always some dry clothing in my knapsack. In rainy weather or for snow travelling the boots should be greased instead of polished. It is a good plan to take a warm rug or shawl for railway travelling; and this, on arriving at one's destination, is left or sent on to a convenient station ready for the return journey. Among

the little *etceteras* not to be forgotten by a pedestrian are needles, thread, buttons, soap, a spare strap, flask, sticking-plaster, writing-paper, envelopes (already directed, as ink is sometimes scarce), glycerine, string, and a knife. A little citrate of magnesia will be found useful for allaying feverishness after a long day's march. Finally, we must not forget to take a large stock of good humour, which will be found invaluable in all climates, provided it is not stowed away too deeply, but kept in a convenient place ready for use at any time.

By reducing the quantity of luggage to a minimum, which must be easily portable, I am able to take personal care of it, and never allow it to go out of my possession. A knapsack is rarely examined by the Customs ; and a pedestrian therefore experiences few delays at railway stations or steamboat piers, and may depart at once with his luggage, and pass independently through the crowd of porters and touters who congregate round those places ; he can move freely from one hotel to another without the annoyance and tie of luggage, and generally incurs less expense at an inn if he enters it with a knapsack on his back.

Whenever it is practicable, and wherever the road presents sufficient attractions, I always

journey on foot ; but I do not by any means advocate systematic walking over barren and uninteresting country. The average distance that a pedestrian can get over, when in good condition, is from 20 to 25 miles a day : in consequence of bad maps and insufficient information I regret to say that we were several times compelled to exceed this limit.

Two or four are the best and most economical numbers for travelling, as they are convenient for double-bedded rooms, for conveyances, if any are taken, and for general companionship. A party of four is perhaps better when travelling in out-of-the-way places ; but a limited company of two is generally pleasanter, as it is difficult to meet with four tourists with similar capacities of strength and power of endurance, or in other ways fitted for one-another's society. A good companion is a great desideratum. It is very frequently the case that a party of gentlemen who know very little of each other's ways and habits start on a tour, and find that they get on so ill together that they separate after a few days. Travelling companions should be previously well known to one another, and possessed of similar tastes and abilities. Before starting, they should agree among themselves as to the route, expense to be incurred, and

mode of travelling. This being settled, there should be a mutual understanding between them to give way to each other, so that when one of them appears a little rusty the other may immediately give in. Having made this bargain before starting, each man will be always on his guard, and a little mishap will be of rare occurrence. The most trying time for your temper is when, entering a town or village tired and hungry after a long day's walk, you cannot at first discover the inn fixed upon for the night's quarters; or, when found, it may be full; or perhaps it is no longer in existence: then is anybody's good humour severely tested.

In seeking information, or in carrying on discussions, a little politeness will be found to go a long way. It is never thrown away, even upon the most boorish villager; and, as the Germans say very truly,

“Mit dem Hut in der Hand
Kommt man durch das ganze Land.”

CHAPTER II.

BORDEAUX—LES LANDES—BAYONNE.

A FINE view of Bordeaux is obtained from the railway. The broad Garonne running through the town gives it somewhat the appearance of Liverpool; but it is neither so large nor so important as that town. The river is spanned by an enormous bridge of seventeen arches, said to be the handsomest in France. The quays are broad and spacious, with large roomy warehouses; but they are ill-paved and dirty. In the centre of the town is the theatre, a very grand building, supported by fine Corinthian columns, standing on the Place de la Comédie, in the finest part of the city. The principal streets are full of first-class shops, and a thorough business-like air prevails throughout the town.

The Cathedral of St. André is a fine old building, having on each side a lofty tower. The stained-glass windows are exceedingly beautiful, and the stonework in many parts highly wrought; the pulpit is of dark walnut or ebony, with granite panels. Two or three of the old

city-gates are still in existence; and these are very curious, and well worth examining.

The houses are mostly large and handsome; and there are some extensive "places" and promenades, ornamented with fine trees and statues, which give the town a most imposing appearance. A good idea of the importance of the town may be obtained by viewing it from the bridge, whence the shipping and quays may be seen to advantage.

From Bordeaux to Bayonne is a tedious railway journey of about seven hours, through the flat sandy district called *les Grandes Landes*. This country is little better than a desert, covered with low bushes and gorse about two feet high, with here and there a small forest of stunted firs. Villages are few and far between, and the few inhabitants seem either to be shepherds or resin-gatherers. The *Landais* shepherds, when pursuing their avocation, are mounted on stilts about three feet high, and are thus enabled to run very fast over the stubbly ground when collecting their flocks or keeping watch over their movements; as we passed in the train, we saw two or three of them thus equipped, leaning on their long poles, which form with the stilts a tripod support.

All the pine trees in the forests are scored

down the bark, to obtain the resin. This substance, which has the appearance of thick honey, runs down the side of the tree, and is collected in a little basket placed against the bark; it requires to be boiled and refined before being sent into the market.

Now and then there is an oasis in this vast wilderness, where the soil is more fertile; and in these spots there is generally a small hamlet, surrounded by a clump of trees, and fields with abundant crops.

For the greater portion of the distance there is but a single line of rails; and arrangements are therefore made for the trains to meet or wait for one another at the stations Moncenx and Dax—the former being the junction for Tarbes, and the latter for Pau. At Moncenx, which consists simply of a straggling line of town-built houses erected in a dreary waste of sand, we employed the short interval of waiting in obtaining some refreshment at the *buffet* of the station. The proprietor of this establishment had such a very curious and systematic way of carrying on business, that I think a description of the same will not only be interesting, but also of some practical value. When inviting the passengers to the *table d'hôte*, he kept continually shouting out the amount of

time remaining at their disposal ; as, for instance, "*Voyageurs pour Bayonne, 20 minutes,*" "*Pour Bordeaux, encore 30 minutes,*" &c. Now one can eat and drink a good deal in twenty minutes, and there was consequently a great rush for the *table d'hôte*. We sat down with the rest, were promptly served, but had scarcely touched the soup when our indefatigable guardian, who was noisily pacing the room, finding no doubt that he could not attract any more customers, began to diminish somewhat rapidly the time yet remaining to us. "*Bayonne encore 15 minutes*" he vociferated, and this number was speedily reduced to 14, 13, 12, his voice growing louder, and his step more hurried as the minutes became less. Presently five minutes were all that remained to us. To many persons this period would be amply sufficient to make up for any lost time, and I contemplated with great satisfaction the possibility of doing a great deal yet. But it was not to be. The last-named number was evidently the signal for the waiters to demand payment ; for we were at once besieged by the attendants, who demanded the sum of three francs and a half for this hurried repast. The well known cry of "*En voiture, messieurs, s'il vous plaît,*" of course sounded immediately

afterwards ; and we were compelled to hurry away to the train, relapsing once more into a state of compulsory inactivity, which contrasted very greatly with the busy and exciting scene we had just left behind us. The whole affair reminded one very forcibly of Mr. Squeers superintending the breakfast of his little boys at the Saracen's Head. We had a weary time to wait at this same station on our return journey by a night train, but were then unfortunately debarred from taking our revenge ; for we found the proprietor had been too sharp for us, and had very wisely closed his establishment. The *buffet* itself is, I must admit, a very good one ; but it is too bad to exaggerate the amount of time at the disposal of passengers merely for the sake of attracting customers, who should be allowed to enjoy a little peace and quietness during the few minutes allotted them for taking refreshment.

Dax is two-thirds of the distance from Bordeaux to Bayonne. The country is still very flat and monotonous. There were two objects at the station which attracted our attention, and afforded us considerable amusement : the first was a very fierce station-master, who was much enraged at our impudence in attempting to alight from the train during a ten-minutes'

stoppage; and the second was a small newspaper-boy, who seemed, from the self-important manner in which he marched up and down the platform, and the dignity with which he made known his presence as the *marchand des journaux*, to be conscious of his being the only specimen of his genus in France, where ladies generally follow this branch of literary pursuit.

On approaching Bayonne the Basque district is entered, extending many hundreds of miles into Spain. The male inhabitants in the Basque country wear a red sash round the waist, and a peculiar head-dress, very like a Scotch cap, but somewhat flatter. It is called a *berret*, and is generally of a blue colour in France, and red in Spain. This costume is almost invariably worn by the peasantry. A few miles past Dax we obtain the first glimpse of the Pyrenees in the distance, evidently mountains in the Val d'Ossau, or adjacent to it.

Bayonne is a strongly fortified town on the Adour; it contains a citadel, and is strongly garrisoned. The town is very irregularly built, and the streets narrow and crooked. The cathedral is well worth visiting, although in a very dilapidated state. There is a large theatre here, and some promenades outside the town and on the quays, tastefully laid out.

Bayonne boasts the name of invincible, the town never having been taken, although many times besieged. In 1814 Wellington, after his victorious campaign in Spain, brought an army against its walls; but a treaty of peace put an end to the siege.

There are several good hotels in Bayonne. We put up the Hotel du Commerce, an old-established inn, which we found both comfortable and reasonable; it is a large establishment, and no doubt was much used as a posting-house before railway communication was made with Spain.

Bayonne was the point fixed upon for commencing our pedestrian journey; and before starting we were naturally anxious to obtain some reliable intelligence respecting the route. Unfortunately our endeavours were of little avail, as the information we received could scarcely be considered either satisfactory or encouraging. All the persons connected with the hotel were of the fair and less grave sex, and the idea of our walking all the way to St. Jean-Pied-de-Port seemed to them so ridiculous that they were unable to refrain from laughing whenever the subject was alluded to. We heard them discussing the joke amid much giggling in the passage; and when we again slept at the

hotel on our return journey, they jokingly inquired how far we had got the first day. Our only companion at the hotel was a German gentleman, who had just returned from a short tour in the mountains. He had experienced very bad weather, and gave a most melancholy account of his trip, advising us to retrace our steps, and pass our holiday in some more pleasant district. He informed us that the high-level roads were perfectly impassable on account of the snow, and narrated some awful anecdotes about footpads and brigands. Finding himself unable to shake our resolution, he parted from us, wishing us a pleasant journey with a very mournful air.

CHAPTER III.

ASPARREN—ST. JEAN-PIED-DE-PORT—COL ST. JUST—
MAULÉON.

THERE are two roads leading from Bayonne to St. Jean-Pied-de-Port, one by Cambo, the other by Asparren ; we chose the latter. Starting from the Place du Théâtre at Bayonne, you cross the small bridge, and turn sharply to the right down a narrow street which leads through the fortifications into the highroad. We make a halt at the first convenient spot by the wayside to assume our light walking-coats, to adjust our burdens, to tighten a strap or ease a buckle, and to make any little alteration or improvement in our harness necessary to our comfort ; and then, having consulted map and compass to ascertain bearings, we shoulder our knapsacks and fairly start off on the tramp.

The road is a very good one, and, like all those throughout the West Pyrenees, marked off into kilometres and tenths of kilometres, and well furnished with sign-posts. When the gates of the town have been passed, there is a fine view of the river stretching out on the

left, spanned by a handsome railway bridge; and on the right are seen the soft blue outlines of the Pyrenees. The road winds through pretty undulating country, with trees and hedges on each side. After three or four miles the path ascends gradually and passes over some hills, which form a foreground to the mountains beyond. At seven miles from Bayonne the road takes a southerly direction, and, leading straight into the mountains, is seen stretching out many miles in front.

Some parts of the road remind one very much of English scenery. Farms are grouped here and there at short intervals; hay-making is going on in the fields, which are divided by good hedges; and on either side are familiar wayside flowers. There seemed to be a scarcity of water about the country; for no stream of any kind was to be seen during the first ten miles. Between the 18th and 19th kilo.-stone there is a primitive little road-side inn bearing this sign: —“On loge à pied et à cheval, aujourd’hui en payant, demain pour rien.”

Although we did not embrace this liberal offer, we visited a similar establishment a few miles further on, where we were charged eight sous only for a litre of good white wine. It is rather rare to find such good French posted up

in this part of the country, as the inhabitants speak a *patois*, and frequently do not understand their mother tongue. As an example of this, we asked a peasant near Asparren the distance to that place, and being unable to reply in French he pointed to eleven o'clock on his watch, to indicate that we might expect to arrive at Asparren by that time.

Asparren is 22 kilos. (14 miles) from Bayonne. It is an important village, containing two small inns, and is the only point at which the tourist can divide his journey between Bayonne and St. Jean. The road, which has been gradually rising all the way to Asparren, now descends somewhat, and becomes more level.

The distance from Asparren to St. Jean is 38 kilos., thus making it 60 kilos. from Bayonne. Owing to inaccurate information, we were not aware of the exact distance on starting from Bayonne, believing it to be about 27 miles, and were therefore rather dismayed when we found out it was nearly 38. However, as we reached Asparren early in the day, we decided upon pushing on to St. Jean at once. Halfway between Asparren and St. Jean is a small village with a poor inn; from this point the road is remarkably pretty, leading through

groves of Spanish chestnut-trees, which overhang the path and afford a delightful shade. Cherry-trees are also exceedingly numerous on the roadside.

At 8 kilos. (5 miles) from St. Jean we join the main road from St. Palais and Mauléon; and passing through St. Jean-le-Vieux (no inn), which is two miles from St. Jean-Pied-de-Port, we arrive at the last-named place.

It was along this road from Bayonne that Marshal Soult marched to relieve the French garrison at Pampluna, having the basis of his operations at St. Jean; and subsequently, when Wellington invaded France, this road was made a strong line of defence, separating the southwest corner of France from the remainder of the empire.

St. Jean-Pied-de-Port is a large village, and contains a comfortable little inn. There is a citadel here, built on an eminence overlooking the village, with a garrison having the establishment of a battalion, which, however, is never kept up to its full strength. The village is situated about 8 miles from the frontier of Spain, at the foot of an important pass (whence it derives the name Pied-de-Port), which leads to Pampluna, and is much used during the summer months. St. Jean does not appear to

be much troubled with tourists, although the country around is exceedingly beautiful.

The next day's journey was by Arcebeau, St. Just, and over a pass to Mauléon. This is a good day's march of about 30 miles. We started early, retraced our steps for about 5 miles to where the road divides, the path to the right leading to Arcebeau and St. Palais, that to the left being the road to Bayonne, along which we had come the preceding day.

While taking a rest under some chestnut-trees at the junction of these roads, we were joined by a pedlar, of whom we requested some directions respecting our route. He very familiarly seated himself at our side and asked us whither we were bound. On informing him of our proposed plans he shook his head, and advised us strongly to go round by St. Palais and Oléron; "for," said he, "you will be able to do double the amount of business at a town of that size to what you would do in a small village. And besides," he added, "if you do pick up one or two commissions in those places, it may be some time before you are able to call round with the goods, and then the people may not accept them." We discovered that he had mistaken us for *Colporteurs*; and he asked to see the samples in our knapsacks. He dis-

suaded us very much from going through St. Just, as he said the road was very steep and stony, but he afterwards admitted that he had never been that way. On explaining to him that we were travelling for pleasure, and not on business, he laughed heartily at our supposing him to be so credulous as to believe such a story, and set out on his way to St. Palais at a good round pace, evidently fearing we should be beforehand with our wares.

The road to Arcebeau ($9\frac{1}{2}$ miles from St. Jean) is not very interesting: the country is undulating; but the way is for some distance bordered with poplars, which render it rather wearisome. On entering Arcebeau we leave the St. Palais road and turn to the right.

Arcebeau is a poor little place, but, like the majority of Pyrenean villages, possesses two establishments devoted to commerce—an inn and a *débit de tabac*. The inn had but a poor appearance; and as we had already tried one of the same character the day before, and found the entertainment to consist solely of white wine and red, we directed our attention this time to the *débit de tabac*. These establishments do not merely supply the articles from which they derive their name, but partake more of the character of a general dealer's. We

walked into the house and preferred the somewhat extraordinary request for a cup of chocolate. A considerable time elapsed before the good people could recover from their astonishment at beholding such outlandish-looking individuals as ourselves in their shop; and a further period was consumed before they could rightly understand what it was we wanted. However, by dint of patience and perseverance, we succeeded in coming to a clear understanding; and they consented to supply our wants. We were led upstairs into a small dark cell, which, although in a very rough and unfinished state, and not overburdened with furniture, was very welcome after walking in a glaring hot sun. In about half an hour they served up two large bowls of delicious chocolate, with some slices of brown bread, of which we made a hearty meal. For this refreshment we paid but six sous each. Good chocolate is to be had in abundance throughout the Pyrenees, and also in North Spain, where it is more generally used than coffee.

The road on to St. Just passes through some magnificent chestnut-groves, and is in some places bordered with cherry-trees. We were invited by a peasant in one of the cottages to help ourselves to some of his cherries, an offer

we gladly availed ourselves of, although I regret to say we rather offended him by tendering money on our departure, which he absolutely refused to take. About four miles from Arcebeau the road crosses a broad stream, which looked so cool and refreshing that we resolved to explore it, and were successful in discovering a snug little nook about 50 yards up the right bank, where we enjoyed a delightful bathe.

One mile past the bridge is St. Just, a village with a fair inn; and thence the road gradually ascends. There are five miles of good up-hill work through a fine forest of chestnuts before arriving at the top of the Col. Near the summit of the pass there is an extensive view towards the north over the *Landes*, only bounded by the limit of vision, the mountain on which you stand appearing to be the most northern of the Pyrenean range. After skirting the top of the mountain, a fine panoramic view of the Pyrenees proper is obtained, many of the peaks being tipped with snow. At the base of the mountains are beautiful meadows and cultivated fields with abundant crops, divided by good hedges; and here and there are little white villages grouped about, which have the appearance of tiny models. A shep-

herd's boy, who was up here occupied in learning his catechism without much fear of being interrupted, pointed out the different mountains and villages, and gave much information, the greater part of which, on reference to the map, was found to be perfectly correct. The Col is, I should think, between 5000 and 6000 feet high.

Half an hour is required to descend to the picturesque little village which lies in the valley at our feet and through which the road winds so prettily; and thence it is five miles further to Mauléon, through undulating and woody country. At two miles on this side of the town is a path to the right, across the river, leading to Tardets; but as the distance to Mauléon is quite sufficient for one day's journey, it is best to stop for the night at that place, and to proceed the next day to Tardets.

When passing by the villages towards evening, it is a pretty sight to see the peasants fetching water from a neighbouring rivulet. This is always considered a woman's duty in Germany and Switzerland; but here it is generally performed by men. The water is taken from the stream by means of a copper ladle, so bright and clean that it shines like gold, and put into wooden vessels, which are made larger

at the top than at the bottom, to allow of their being easily balanced on the head. At first we were under the impression that milk was contained in these curiously shaped tubs, and we stopped a peasant whom we met with one for the purpose of begging a drink ; and great was our disappointment when we found out our mistake, although we could not resist the temptation of taking a sip from his golden ladle.

Mauléon is a small town with a good inn. Five and a half francs each was sufficient to supply us with supper, bed, and breakfast,—the supper being a most elaborate affair, and consisting of soup, trout, ham and peas, brains with sauce piquante, cutlets, bifstecks, vegetables, and dessert, with lemonade and claret *ad libitum*. As a summer beverage nothing can excel *limonade gazeuse* mixed with red wine ; there are large manufactories of lemonade in the Pyrenees, and it is to be had anywhere at a very moderate cost.

We invariably received good entertainment at these inns ; and even in the most primitive spots, where we had been led to expect very rough treatment, an omelette and trout were always to be had, and likewise good wine and chocolate. We should have found the accommodation at Mauléon more comfortable, had

we not been compelled to share our room with a family of rats, who testified the delight they felt at our visit in a very noisy manner; they invited a large circle of their acquaintance to meet us, and insisted on entertaining us during the night with all kinds of athletic sports.

CHAPTER IV.

OLÉRON—VAL D'ASASPE—BÉDOUS—COL DES MOINES.

To reach the Val d'Asaspe, if possible, was the programme for the next day. As we were rather fatigued, and wished to shorten our walk as much as possible, we decided on availing ourselves of a little post-waggon which runs once a day between Mauléon and Oléron, a town at the mouth of the Val d'Asaspe. We settled our modest bill at the inn, receiving from the pretty waitress, by way of acknowledgment, two beautiful moss-roses (which she kindly pinned into our button-holes), and then started for Oléron. This town is 41 kilometres distant, and the fare charged from Mauléon was $3\frac{1}{2}$ francs.

The conveyance, besides carrying passengers and the post-bags, appeared to answer the purpose of a baker's cart, and started with a cargo of loaves, to be delivered at the different villages we passed through. The highroad passes by Tardets, the first portion of it being flat and monotonous; but after the first five miles it rises some distance above the river, and there is a fine view of the mountains in front. Pass-

suburb Ste. Marie, 7000 inhabitants, and is situated at the opening of the Val d'Asaspe, on the Gave d'Asaspe, which divides the town into two parts. It is a picturesque town, some portions of it being built on an eminence overlooking the rest. It is quite a business-place, containing several large streets and factories, and two or three good inns. Diligences run from Oléron to the principal places in the Pyrenees.

In order to ascend the Asaspe valley you take the road running parallel with the stream, which you keep on the left. There is a good carriage-road as far as Urdos; but beyond, it is practicable for saddle-horses only. This valley is a great highway into Spain, and much used in summer. After the first few miles of flat road and monotonous poplars have been passed, there is a magnificent view in front, and the road becomes prettier. At Asaspe, five miles from Oléron, we made a short halt at an inn to allow the heat of the day to abate; for we had found our walk along the dusty highway very hot and fatiguing, the avenues of poplars, through which the road passes, affording about as much shade as telegraph-poles. While we were resting, the landlady was very curious to make out what we were, and evidently set us down for pedlars.

She examined the knapsacks critically, and seemed to pity us very much in having to trudge about the country with such heavy loads, and at last she ventured the question "Est-ce-que vous vendez quelque chose?"

A little past the village the mountain-path from Aramits joins the main route. The road soon becomes more hilly, and the stream or Gave more rapid; for we are now in the midst of the mountains. On both sides of the way are dense hedges of box, a shrub very common in the Pyrenees, and the green fields on the hill-slopes are decked with buttercups.

Towards evening we met two of the gendarmerie, who were very eager to have a little chat, and gave us some excellent advice. I would recommend the tourist, whenever he requires information, to seek it, if possible, of Gendarmes or Douaniers, who are to be met with in most of the villages about here. They always possess a thorough knowledge of the country, and are quite disinterested in what they say. About 13 kilos. from Oléron the stream, which has hitherto been on the left, is crossed by a fine stone bridge called the Pont d'Escot. From the foot of the bridge there is a path to the Eaux Bonnes and Eaux Chaudes, both of which places are 43 kilos. distant.

When the Pont d'Escot has been passed, we enter the finest part of the Val d'Asaspe. As we proceed, the mountains close in around us, and in some places there is scarcely space for the road and the bright-green torrent which runs beside it. On each side, almost overhanging the path, are mountain-walls of enormous height, the sides of which are richly cultivated. The slopes present one vast expanse of soft green verdure of various shades and tints, being covered with lawn-like meadows and cultivated fields, separated one from another by a copse or hedge of bright foliage. There is not a bare spot or barren rock visible to mar the soft and peaceful aspect of the valley, which, of its kind, stands perfectly unrivalled. Nothing so lovely and so sublime have I ever witnessed either in Switzerland or Italy.

The road winds through the valley, and at $2\frac{1}{4}$ kilos. from the Pont d'Escot the busy little village of Sarance is reached, situated in a deep hollow. There is an inn here, and two or three factories. When past the village, the path crosses the stream, recrossing it again $2\frac{1}{2}$ kilos. further on, near a waterfall. About a mile before reaching Bédous, at a spot where the valley contracts very much, is the ruin of an embra-sure or fort, evidently built for the purpose of

commanding the upper part of the Val d'Asaspe. The village of Bédous is situated in the middle of a small plain, $6\frac{1}{2}$ kilos. from Sarance. It is a dirty place, with a small inn, where we rested for the night, the prices charged being rather exorbitant, taking into consideration the quality of the accommodation.

We decided on walking to the Eaux Chaudes over the Col des Moines, which connects the Val d'Asaspe with the Val d'Ossau; we therefore continued up the valley as far as Accous, a village at the foot of the pass. After half an hour's walk through poplars, we leave the Val d'Asaspe and turn to the left at the second kilo.-stone from Bédous, following a footpath which leads to Accous by a short cut. The path to the Col is easily found, as it is the continuation of the main street of the village.

Nearly five hours are required to reach the summit of the Col from Accous. The ascent as far as the first plateau is rather stony; the path then passes through some green fields, keeping by the side of the stream. Thence it becomes very rugged, and, with the exception of here and there a stunted beech tree, which affords a welcome shelter from the hot sun, the vegetation consists of nothing but furze and box bushes. As you ascend further the bushes

disappear altogether, and there succeeds a smooth grassy slope.

Before mounting the last portion of the Col, we halted by the side of a stream under a huge boulder for rest and refreshment. Here we made a good luncheon (we had provided ourselves with a large German sausage, covered with tin-foil, at Bayonne, on purpose for our tour), our drink consisting of weak brandy-and-water, mixed with a little citrate of magnesia. It is only after toiling away at hard treadmill work for some time in a hot sun with a burden at one's back, which seems at every step to become heavier, that the luxury of a rest in the cool shade can be thoroughly enjoyed: it is perfect bliss to throw off one's load and to lie down on the soft turf, dozing off for a short time whilst listening to the sound of the brook bubbling over the pebbles and discoursing the sweetest music that can be imagined, true *Lieder ohne Worte*, not by a Mendelssohn, but by a warbling *Bach*.

It is customary to regard a holiday as an indulgence, a luxury, and an event of personal gratification; and a holiday-maker is not unfrequently looked upon in the same light as a boy that is playing the truant. This probably arises from the fact that the holiday-maker, if

his intervals of rest and relaxation are few and far between, himself feels a misgiving as to whether he is justified in pausing in his work ; he is so elated and overjoyed at finding himself freed from his daily toil, at being unfettered by his accustomed anxieties and troubles, at becoming once more a child free to roam wherever his fancy may dictate, that he is apt to regard the source of his happiness as a sweet forbidden fruit. Should his daily pursuits chance to be of a sedentary character, necessitating a residence in some large city surrounded by a murky atmosphere, more or less vitiated with soot, smoke, and noxious vapours, the enjoyment of a short release from work will be doubly enhanced. The warm sunshine, the green fields, the bright foliage, the blue sky, the cool refreshing breeze, and, above all, the possession of freedom exert an almost magic influence upon him when he feels that the world is still bright and beautiful.

A holiday is as great a purpose as labour ; it is not merely a pleasure, but a duty, and a duty which we owe not only to ourselves but to our fellow men ; for the absence of rest and relaxation begets sickness of mind and body, afflictions which, besides being a source of pain to the sufferer, exert a depressing influence upon

those who surround him. In earlier days, when our towns were less densely populated than at present, when machinery was little used, when our industrial pursuits had not arrived at their present state of perfection, and there was less excitement connected with our habits and customs, work was conducted in a more rational and methodical manner; but since the application of steam to machinery and railways, the establishment of the penny post, the invention of the telegraph, and the introduction of other radical changes, everything is required to be done at express speed, and we carry on our business with corresponding haste and bustle, jostling one another in our strenuous exertions to get through the greatest amount of work in the shortest possible time. From one year's end to another we are constantly surrounded by business, steeped in it, saturated with it; our thoughts are wholly devoted to it, and our great aim is to conduct our affairs with the utmost dispatch and rapidity. This practice of keeping on in the same unvarying course, straining every nerve and thought to the attainment of one particular worldly object, if allowed to continue unchecked for any lengthened period, must exert a prejudicial effect upon the mind, and have a tendency to render a man

narrow-minded and selfish, and even morose and uncharitable. A short break in his busy career, a periodical release from his tightly fitting harness, an interval, however short, spent in the enjoyment of freedom suffices to recall that freshness and naturalness of disposition of which his artificial life has robbed him. The first breath of pure air drawn amid the beauties of nature, after months or years of weary mental labour, awakens the pleasantest reminiscences, and calls up the most agreeable associations. Sometimes, when listening to the strains of a beautiful melody, or gazing upon a finely executed painting, or reading some touching poem, reflections half sad, half joyful, take possession of the mind, invoked by those artistic productions all of which are merely transcripts of nature itself, made by some genius who has enjoyed the same feelings with which his work has inspired us, and has been able to record their influence upon his senses, and impart it to others. A ramble in the woods in early summer or autumn—when nature has assumed its most beautiful garb, when the sunbeams glisten through the trees and brighten the variegated foliage, when the songs of the birds and the rustling of the leaves and branches blend together in melodious harmony, when the rivulet

sparkles in the sunlight, and the fragrance of wild flowers is borne on the gentle breeze—does more to influence a man's character and actions in calling up better and holier thoughts than all the sermons that have been or ever will be preached.

It requires a good pull and a strong pull to bring you from the last grassy plateau to the top of the Col, the distance being very deceptive. The path is not always very distinct, especially near the top; but in summer no guide is necessary. From the summit you appear surrounded on all sides by lofty mountains, many of them, especially those in front, being crowned with snow. We met a shepherd up here, with whom we had a long conversation. He told us that in summer he lived on the mountains for months together, with no other companions than his sheep and dog. He never found the time heavy on his hands, he said; he had no employment, and did nothing in particular to while away the time except lie on his back in the sunshine. He had never been educated, and therefore could not occupy himself in reading; but he often amused himself by singing and whistling. He pointed out two vultures of enormous size, which seemed larger *even* than the Lämmergeier of Switzerland,

perched on a rock near us; they never attacked the sheep, he said, but confined themselves to killing the chamois or izzards, as they are here called, and small birds. Alpenrosen, London Pride, and Shepherd's Looking-glasses of a very bright blue, are to be found in great abundance high up the mountain when other vegetation has nearly ceased.

Two hours are necessary to reach the Eaux Chaudes from the top of the Col, descending the valley till you reach the Val d'Ossau at right angles, and then turning to the left. A forest of beech trees occupies the lower portion of the valley, which becomes a magnificent gorge as you descend. On our way down we entered a shepherd's hut, and, requesting a drink of milk, were brought a large funnel-shaped tin vessel holding a couple of gallons, with which we very nearly succeeded in drowning ourselves. The milk was quite new and warm, and the shepherd was highly gratified with the half-franc tendered for payment. How different this from a Swiss Sennerhütte, where for a pint or two of goat's milk the shepherd will grumble at anything less than a franc.

The beech wood in the valley is used by charcoal-burners, many of whom are passed on

the road down ; and much of it is also cut up for use as fuel. The wood and charcoal are conveyed down the valley on a tramway made in a very ingenious manner. Poles about three inches in diameter and from three to four feet in length are laid down on the path parallel to each other, about a foot apart, in the manner of sleepers, and at each extremity of these poles are short upright pieces of wood, which form the border or edge of the tramway. A small wooden sledge is laden with timber and dragged by oxen over these poles, which become quite smooth after a little use, the sledge being kept upon the tram by the upright sticks on either side. This tramway was three or four miles in length, and, judging from the amount of traffic, seemed to answer the purpose admirably.

The Eaux Chaudes are only a mile and a half distant from the spot where this valley runs into the Val d'Ossau. I would advise the tourist, however, if he has an hour or two to spare, to ascend the valley towards Gabas for a few miles before proceeding to the Eaux. The Val d'Ossau contains some of the finest scenery in the Pyrenees, and presents a perfect contrast to the Val d'Asaspe—the former being wild and grand, the latter with its luxuriant crops and grassy lawns quite soft and pastoral.

Between the Eaux Chaudes and Gabas the torrent forms some beautiful cascades (one about two miles above the Eaux being remarkably fine), which, together with the stupendous rocky walls of the mountains overhanging the valley, compose one of the grandest defiles that can be conceived.

CHAPTER V.

VAL D'OSSAU—EAUX CHAUDES—EAUX BONNES—COL DE
TORTE—VAL D'AZUN—ARRUNS—ARGELLEZ.

THE Eaux Chaudes consist of a narrow street and a few detached buildings, tightly wedged in between two gigantic walls of rock, which are not more than 150 yards apart, and rise abruptly to the height of two or three thousand feet. The village contains an *établissement des bains* and two large hotels. The Hôtel Baudot was our resting-place; we found it well conducted, and the landlady remarkably kind and attentive.

The regular season of the Pyrenean watering-places does not commence before the 1st of July; so that it had scarcely begun when we visited the different spas. There are four mineral springs here, all of which are conducted into the *établissement*; the temperature of the warmest is 95° Fahr. While staying here we were fortunate enough to see the celebration of the Fête-Dieu, a ceremony which brought together many of the neighbouring peasantry, whose curious costumes presented a very gay and theatrical appearance. The women mostly

wore a red or black cloak, which enveloped the head and shoulders, something after the style of those worn by nuns: nearly all the men were dressed in breeches and white stockings, some few having red jackets; and all of course wore the "berret" cap. The peasantry marched in a procession to an altar erected in the open air on the esplanade, the men coming first, the priests following, and the women bringing up the rear. Arrived at the altar, everybody knelt down while a short mass was performed. It was a very picturesque and imposing sight, although the effect was somewhat marred by a high wind continually extinguishing the candles, which it required the greatest agility on the part of the censer-boys to keep alight.

A pleasant excursion may be made up the valley, past Gabas, into Spain, to the Baths of Penticosa, situated at an altitude of 8000 feet above the sea; it takes from 12 to 14 hours on foot.

There is an omnibus from the Eaux Chaudes to the Eaux Bonnes, a distance of five miles, which the hotel people were very anxious for us to avail ourselves of, as they were quite sure we must feel tired after walking about so much; and we had some difficulty in explaining to them that the reason of our coming a distance

of 1000 miles was not for the purpose of riding in an omnibus, as that was a thing we could do any day in London, but in order to see the country. It is quite beyond my comprehension that anybody, except an invalid, can be prevailed upon to be shut up in a closed conveyance while passing such charming scenery, being able to enjoy but a very limited view of it through a piece of glass about a foot square, and perhaps sitting all the time with his back to the finest part. This is even worse than the Swiss story of the Englishman (it is always an Englishman abroad who is connected with absurd stories) who engaged a char-à-banc to take him round the Lake of Geneva. By the by, he must have been a very stupid Englishman indeed to want to go all round the lake, as the scenery in many parts is very uninteresting. Now a char-à-banc is a vehicle in which you sit sideways, as in an Irish car, but it is closed in on all sides except in front of the passenger. The Englishman jumped into the conveyance, and off it started; but after travelling for some time, and being unable to obtain a glimpse of any water at all, he got out and discovered that his coachman was driving the char the wrong way round the lake, with the back of the vehicle towards it, exposing to the gaze of the wonder-

ing traveller nothing more striking than a view of the opposite side of the road.

The lower part of the valley is remarkably grand. At 4 kilos. below the Eaux Chaudes a bridge is passed on the left, over which runs the old road by the Hourat to Laruns. This is a very romantic spot, the torrent rushing some hundreds of feet below the road between precipitous rocks, which rise to a fearful height, and completely overshadow the path: in some parts the valley very much resembles the Via Mala. A few yards past the bridge, on the left, a small flight of stone steps will be seen, at the bottom of which a fine view of a series of cascades may be obtained, equalling, if not surpassing, in grandeur those of the Giessbach. There is another descent some few yards further on to the right, under the arches (100 feet in height) supporting the road; but the view is not so good. The road continues through this rocky gorge for about half a mile, when the valley suddenly opens at the junction of the roads from Laruns and the Eaux Bonnes. This spot is equidistant from the two Eaux, in the middle of a large plain or basin, out of which four valleys diverge.

The highroad to the Eaux Bonnes runs along a series of open terraces, or tourniquets; but

there is a pretty footpath through a wood to the right of the road, behind the signpost, which is pleasanter and shorter.

The valley in which the Eaux Bonnes are situated is not so fine as that of the Eaux Chaudes; but the former spa is a larger and more fashionable watering-place. It contains about twelve hotels, several stylish lodging-houses, and of course a grand *établissement des bains*. It has none of the characteristics of a village, but has the appearance of a bright little town. There is a public garden called the *Jardin Anglais*, and quite a bazaar of shops and booths, and some beautiful promenades tastefully laid out. One of them, called the *Chemin Horizontal*, in contra-distinction to the others, which are more or less hilly, is a terrace more than a mile in length, presenting a most varied panorama of the surrounding mountains and valleys. The Eaux Bonnes would be a delightful spot for a few weeks' sojourn, as the neighbourhood abounds in excursions and fine points of view. We put up at the Hôtel de France, one of the best in the place, and found the accommodation first-class and the charges reasonable. There was a library, reading-room, and saloon attached to the hotel, all fitted up in the best Parisian style.

The hotel-charges at different places were very variable. Sometimes, when we established our quarters in a secluded spot, where tourists were little known, the bill for supper, bed, and breakfast for two people amounted to but eight francs; at other times we arrived at some fashionable spa, and our expenses for the same entertainment would amount to more than three times that sum. The accommodation, in the latter case, was of course of a higher class, but the quantity and quality of the board were pretty nearly the same.

A great annoyance at the Eaux Bonnes is the number of guides and hangers-on who infest the place. Some of these men are very gorgeously clothed, and evidently kept by the hotels to show off the peculiar costume of the country—that is, the hotel-keepers' ideas of the national costume. There are good, well-marked paths from the Eaux Bonnes to all the principal excursion-places round about, and therefore the assistance of guides is quite unnecessary; in many parts, however, where a guide is really required over a dangerous pass or glacier, they are difficult to obtain.

The road to Argeliez and Cauterets from the Eaux Bonnes branches out from the middle of the town (I cannot call it a village), exactly

opposite the *Jardin Anglais*. There is a carriage-road all the way; but in some parts, near the top of the Col de Torte, it is soft and rotten. At starting, the stream is on the left; but the road crosses it after a gradual ascent of half a mile.

The Col de Torte may be reached in $2\frac{3}{4}$ hours from the Eaux Bonnes, good walking. The top is covered with smooth turf; and there is a fine view of craggy peaks in front. Murray states that you may know the Col by a remarkable rock which elevates itself on the left and resembles the root of an eye-tooth. Whether we came over the Col by the same route as Mr. Murray I cannot say; but there certainly was no rock whatever at the top, unless (as is generally the case with the root of an eye-tooth) it may have been covered up and concealed from view.

After passing the Col de Torte you descend and skirt a rocky mountain for the distance of about four miles. In some places the road is hewn out of the solid stone; and at one spot there is a short tunnel, similar to those on the Simplon road. About a mile before reaching the second Col, we discovered, on a rocky ledge above the road, a bird's nest containing four eggs, which had been sucked out by a snake we found coiled up inside. We ejected the in-

truder from his comfortable quarters, and he paid the penalty of his sins with his life. On this same road we disturbed a large vulture from a rock not ten yards above our heads; and as he flew away, his gigantic wings quite overshadowed our path.

The second Col is not so high as the Col de Torte, and is reached in about two hours' walk from the latter. It is halfway between the Eaux Bonnes and Argellez, reckoning by distance and not by time. The top is flat and marshy; and there is no view till you begin the descent on the other side, where the country is remarkably pretty. A magnificent view is then obtained of the Val d'Azun below; at your feet lies the village of Arruns, and a little above it, placed on a pedestal in a tuft of trees, is a grand old monastery. As you continue to descend, the scenery is still more lovely, till you reach the village.

We had a rest on the mountain-slope, in a pretty meadow full of buttercups, lying under the shade of some walnut-trees, whence we could enjoy the prospect comfortably. Here we noticed some very primitive carts, which were laden with materials for road-making, and drawn by oxen: they were of the most rude description, and seemed perfect relics of antiquity.

resembling the pictures we see of old Anglo-Saxon conveyances. They were very small, and composed of rough frames on four wooden wheels, which were merely disks of wood, about a foot in diameter; these wooden-disk wheels are much used throughout the Pyrenees; and in the towns of North Spain cart-wheels of any other description are seldom seen.

The temperature of the lower Pyrenean valleys is particularly warm; and sometimes the heat was so oppressive that we were compelled to adopt a species of Indian head-dress while walking, easily contrived by folding a white handkerchief over our felt hats. In this manner we managed to keep our heads tolerably cool, especially when taking the additional precaution of moistening our handkerchiefs now and then at a passing brook. In many of the spas white hoods, made specially to fit over felt hats, may be purchased.

Before reaching the 16 kilo.-stone to Argeliez there is a short cut to the right, straight down the side of the mountain to Arruns, saving at least half a mile of dusty road. At Arruns (one hour's walk from the second Col) a short halt was made at an auberge standing a little back from the street, in the middle of the *village*. In compliance with a demand for

something to eat and drink, we were supplied with some excellent bread and butter, and a large soup-tureen of *café au lait*. This inn was a queer little place, and kept by a model landlord—a *Douanier en retraite*. He was a well-educated man, and remarkably chatty. He talked about making grand alterations in his house, and calling it the Hôtel de France. In his bedroom, into which we were shown, as being the best room in the house, we found a large collection of classical works, *Virgil, De Viris Illustribus urbis Romæ, Sophocles, Cornelii Nepotis Opera*, &c. He said he had two sons in the Church, and two others non-commissioned officers in the French army, and showed us all their portraits, taken in their respective dresses and uniforms. He gave us some important information respecting the passes into Spain, all of which he was well acquainted with, owing to his having been a custom-house officer.

On leaving Arruns the way lies through several villages over a flat road. On looking back up the Val d'Azun, there is a magnificent view of snowy peaks, which seem to block up the valley completely; this is decidedly one of the finest sights in the Pyrenees. The road now descends into a lower valley, which for luxuriant foliage and verdure stands almost un-

rivalled. At the mouth of this beautiful emerald valley, rather more than seven miles from Arruns, stands Argellez, a little town with only one well-known inn, the Hôtel de France. We had, however, been told by our friend at the Auberge at Arruns that there was another very comfortable inn on the market-place, at the corner where the road leading to Cauterets branches off. Acting upon his advice we sought out this house of entertainment, which, as there is no sign or name outside, was rather difficult to find. It was simple and homely in character ; but the accommodation was good, and the prices reasonable. We were received like old friends as soon as we stated by whom we had been recommended ; and the landlady and her daughter placed chairs for us to sit down, and wanted to have a long chat with us.

CHAPTER VI.

PIERREFITTE—CAUTERETS—PONT D'ESPAGNE—LAC DE
GAUBE.

THE Val d'Argeliez, or as it is often called, the *Paradis d'Argeliez*, is a broad and not particularly beautiful valley, and scarcely so fine as its name leads one to expect. No doubt it is called a *Paradis* in the same sense that the gallery in the little *Théâtre Français* at Bordeaux is called by that name: both very good things in their way, if one cannot go elsewhere, but by no means equal to many places which are close to them.

To reach Cauterets from Argeliez we proceed up the valley as far as Pierrefitte (5 kilos.) along a flat dusty road, which would be very tedious and uninteresting if it did not now and then lead through a little copse or a shady avenue of elms. Two miles from Argeliez we pass on the right a large monastery, situated in a commanding position on the slope of a mountain; but, excepting this, there is little else worthy of note. Pierrefitte is a small village, containing two inns, at the junction of the valleys of Cauterets and Luz, the road to the

former place branching off to the right, and the other to the left.

Leaving Pierrefitte, you do not take the carriage-road, which winds round to the right, but keep straight on in the old path, which is much shorter. The scenery at the entrance of the Cauterets valley is very fine: the mountain-walls on each side are covered with dark foliage; and below are bare precipices of rocks, rising some hundreds of feet above the torrent, which is here a vast mass of foam. In some parts of the Pyrenees, where the mountains are not so high, there are but few streams or rivers; but in the more mountainous districts rivulets and torrents are very abundant. The water is much clearer than in Switzerland: there it is generally turbid, and has a chalky appearance, whilst here it flows perfectly pure and bright.

The distance from Pierrefitte to Cauterets by the old road is about 9 kilos., by the new road it is 11. Excellent carriage-roads are being made in the neighbourhood of all the principal Spas; they are called *routes thermaux*, and are in many cases masterpieces of engineering. Care is taken to have at least on one side of the road a running stream from which it may be watered by the road-makers, who use a long wooden scoop for the purpose. By

this means the road is kept perfectly free from dust, an article very abundant in these parts. The foliage in the valley is of various tints ; and among the trees there are a few Spanish chestnuts, but not in the same number as on the other side of the Val d'Asaspe. At 4 kilos. from Cauterets the road becomes very rocky, and we ascend into an upper valley, where the stream on the right forms a series of beautiful cascades, which are well seen from a rustic bridge across the stream.

Cauterets is situated 3200 feet above the level of the sea ; it is more of a town than any other of the mountain-spas, not excepting Luz, and, on account of its lofty position, is not so charmingly situated as the majority of them. With the exception of several well-made promenades near the *établissement*, there are but few pleasant spots in the immediate neighbourhood, which in many parts has a cold and desolate appearance ; a little distance out of town, however, there are several localities worth visiting, where the scenery is remarkably grand and the aspect of the country more cheerful. As a Pyrenean watering-place, Cauterets enjoys a reputation second to none ; and the ample accommodation provided for visitors testifies to the prosperity of the place. It is frequented

more by real invalids anxious to derive benefit from the curative powers of the waters than by people in search of recreation, and therefore has not the gay, holiday appearance possessed by some of the other *Brunnen*. It is a favourite place of resort of the Spaniards, who seem more particularly to appreciate the very unsavoury tepid sulphurous springs abounding in the neighbourhood. There is a large *établissement des bains*, and many smaller establishments about a mile further up the valley. Like all other fashionable spas it is infested with guides and horse-jobbers. The former generally have their names and qualifications painted up outside their houses in large characters—as, for instance, “Guide de 1^{ère} classe,” “Chasseur des Izzards et des Ours,” &c. The timid traveller need not feel at all alarmed at these inscriptions through supposing that he is surrounded by the haunts of wild beasts; for izzards are now becoming very rare, and bears, at any rate in the inhabited parts of the Pyrenees, exist merely in the imagination of enthusiastic guides.


Although we arrived in Cauterets before the commencement of the season, and there were few visitors, we found the hotel accommodation very expensive. Our bill at the Hôtel des

Ambassadeurs included, among other items, a charge of 7 francs for a double-bedded room, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ franc for a cup of chocolate. The proprietor of the hotel had no knowledge whatever of English money, although in the town many of the guides accosted us in that language, and there were in the streets several inscriptions which showed that Englishmen were not altogether unknown at Cauterets. When we tendered a sovereign in part payment of our bill, change was returned for a 20-franc piece; and on our pointing out the error, the people at the hotel returned us the sovereign, saying that they were not acquainted with that piece of money at all. We remarked that it was scarcely prudent of them in such a case to offer twenty francs for a strange coin, and paid them in French money, of which we fortunately had sufficient, much to our own satisfaction, and, I trust, to theirs. This was the only time we experienced a difficulty in passing English gold.

The principal excursion from Cauterets is to the Pont d'Espagne and Lac de Gaube, which, allowing for a rest on the way, takes about five hours going and returning. No guide is necessary.

The way leads through the main street of the town and over a bridge to the right. Then,

passing through a desolate valley of rocks, we come to a long white building containing the Baths of "La Raillière;" a little further on at a stone bridge with iron railings the road divides, the path over the bridge leading up a rugged incline to a fine waterfall, while the other one, turning to the right before crossing the stream and leading past two small bathing-establishments, is the road to the Pont d'Espagne. I am particular in giving precise directions, in order that a tourist may easily find the way, and be quite independent of the unnecessary appendage of a lazy guide. The path soon becomes rather steep, and you ascend, keeping the stream on the right, and not crossing it till you come to the Pont d'Espagne. At the Pont itself there is very little to see—a few pine-branches placed over the stream and a waterfall of moderate dimensions; but all the way up to the bridge there is a succession of fine scenery. The stream is broken up into a series of magnificent cascades, the water, in some instances, having a direct fall of nearly a hundred feet. These waterfalls are of considerable breadth, and when viewed from the bottom, surrounded on all sides by the dark pine-forest, have a tremendously grand appearance; three of them are particularly fine. About halfway to the Pont a



small plateau is reached, whence a splendid view is obtained through the dark foliage, of some beautiful snow-mountains. It takes about two hours to reach the Pont from Cauterets; and another hour is required to the Lac de Gaube.

To ascend to the lake you take the steep path on your left, by the side of a torrent, which will be seen a few yards before you arrive at the Pont d'Espagne. This path is stony and difficult at the commencement, but improves after a short distance. A lovely view of the snowy Vignemale and its glaciers is obtained as you ascend. The lake is not seen till you have approached within a dozen yards of it.

There are very few lakes in the Pyrenees, and the Lac de Gaube is the largest. It is between two and three miles in circumference, remarkably clear, and of a greenish hue. There are two huts on its bank, belonging to a fisherman, who keeps a kind of hostelry, and supplies travellers with trout from the lake. There is a little rock jutting out into the water, with a marble monument to the memory of an English barrister and his wife, who were accidentally drowned here on their wedding-trip in 1832. A path leads from the further end of the lake

to Gavarnie, passing by the Vignemale glaciers: the distance can be performed in five hours; but a guide is requisite. The ascent of the Vignemale is generally made from the lake, tourists passing the night at the fisherman's hut. The lake is fed from the Vignemale glaciers, and is of course of a very low temperature.

It is always much pleasanter to make mountain-excursions of this kind by one's self, dispensing, whenever it is at all possible, with the services of a guide. We may wish to go a little out of our way to visit a waterfall or to obtain a view from a neighbouring eminence, or we desire sometimes to linger awhile on our journey, and make a short halt now and then; and if we do not happen to be alone, these little wishes are not easily gratified; for the guide is generally interested in doing his allotted work in as short a time as possible, and therefore discountenances any delay on the road. Arrived at our destination the guide is generally in league with an innkeeper of the place; and under some pretence or other we are often compelled to accept indifferent fare at exorbitant prices; or if the guide happens to be carrying any of the traveller's luggage he generally manages to arrive a few moments in advance, and coolly walks into an inn, and de-

posits the property in the travellers' room, thus rendering it scarcely possible to go away without taking some refreshment. Of course a little firmness will remedy many of these evils; but petty annoyances of this kind always prove a source of worry and anxiety. With regard to performing excursions on horseback, "let those do so who like it," say I. The hard uncomfortable saddles, the fatigue, the necessity of keeping to the beaten track, the fact of having something else to care for besides one's self, and, lastly, though not least, the expense, lead me to the conclusion that walking is by far the best means of locomotion.

Nothing can exceed the enjoyment of the first half-hour's rest on arriving at an inn regularly tired out after a hard day's walk. It is such an agreeable change to be physically tired, and not merely mentally, as is the case with most of us during the greater part of the year. While dinner is preparing, you indulge in the luxury of a cool wash, leisurely put on your slippers, and effect any change in your attire which your wardrobe will allow of. Having thus made yourself as comfortable and also as respectable as possible under the circumstances, you sit down with a good appetite to enjoy your evening meal.

We had scarcely rested at the lake for a quarter of an hour when we became enveloped in thick clouds, and on our way down we were caught in a terrific thunderstorm. We took shelter under some rocks near the Pont d'Espagne, whence every now and then a beautiful glimpse of the mountains was visible through a break in the clouds. It required an hour and a half's good walking to descend from the Lac de Gaube to Caunterets, where we arrived in a very damp condition ; and as, unfortunately, our change of clothes consisted solely of a dry waistcoat, we had no alternative but to retire to our beds at an early hour. We luckily suffered no disagreeable consequences from our wetting, and I think it is very rarely the case that one catches cold when performing so much out-door exercise. I can, however, recommend a valuable specific for curing a cold, if requisite. Immediately before getting into bed take some violent exercise, using dumb-bells or clubs, or anything that is handy for the purpose, and when regularly tired out, drink off immediately a glass of something very hot, or if that is not procurable, a glass of something very cold ; jump quickly into bed, pull the clothes over your head, and then fancy to yourself that there is a burglar in the room, or under your bed, or

feeling in your pockets, or stealing your watch, which is hanging up six inches above your head. This will soon induce a profuse perspiration, more especially if the treatment be conducted in a strange house with your bedroom-door partly open.

CHAPTER VII.

LUZ—ST SAUVEUR—BARÈGES—TOURMALET—PIC DU
MIDI—GRIP WATERFALLS—COL D'ASPIN—ABREAU.

THERE is no other way of getting from Cauterets to Luz than by returning down the valley as far as Pierrefitte; but as by these means a different view of this magnificent glen is obtained, it is an exceedingly pleasant necessity.

About 2 kilos. after leaving Pierrefitte the valley of Luz is entered, which is even grander than that of Cauterets, the mountains being steeper and the defile narrower and wilder. The peasants about here, and also further up the valley towards Barèges, have a very miserable appearance, and seem poorly clothed and fed. Although it was in the middle of June, they were still huddled up in large brown blankets, which enveloped the whole of their bodies, and appeared to be their principal garment.

The distance from Pierrefitte to Luz is 12 kilos. At 4 kilos. from Pierrefitte the old road crosses the stream by a rotten bridge, while the new road, hollowed out of solid rock, remains on the left bank. The new road is the shorter route. Another kilo. further on we

come to the grandest part of the valley, where the torrent forces its way through a rocky chasm, only a few yards wide, some hundreds of feet below the road, while the surrounding scenery presents a most wild and savage appearance. A portion of the Val d'Ossau, near the Eaux Chaudes, is very similar to this part of the valley. A short distance further on, the rocky walls open out a little to make room for a patch of green verdure dotted with farm-buildings. This spot is situated some considerable distance below the road, and has the appearance of a smooth lawn, its soft and pastoral aspect contrasting greatly with the awful ravine by which it is surrounded. At 8 kilos. from Pierrefitte the valley is crossed by a stone bridge, in the middle of which is an inscription dated 1807, to the memory of Queen Hortense. After crossing the bridge, whence a good view up the Val de Barèges is obtained, the valley widens considerably; and the last two miles of road to Luz is conducted through an avenue of fine poplars.

Luz is a small town, composed of narrow streets. With the exception of the old church and two old ruined castles, said to have been invested by Edward the Black Prince, there is little to be seen. The fabric called Crêpe de

Barèges, of world-wide celebrity, is manufactured here and at Bagnères de Bigorre, though certainly not in sufficient quantity to supply all demands for that article. Luz is not such a pleasant spot to reside at as St. Sauveur, which lies half a mile from the town, and may be considered an aristocratic suburb.

St. Sauveur is built on the slope of a smoothly-turfed hill, and consists of one street of large white houses. The finest view of it is obtained from the hill opposite, at the foot of the Pic de Bergons, whence it is seen partly hidden by the surrounding foliage. It is decidedly the prettiest Spa in the Pyrenees, and one I should certainly choose for a residence. It contains a large *établissement*, and a beautiful modern church built of white stone. As at Cauterets, the season does not commence here till July ; and at the time of our visit large bales of merchandise were arriving for stocking the shops, which had not yet been opened. All letters directed to Poste Restante, Luz, are sent to the post-office at St. Sauveur, as the office at Luz is only a branch establishment.

St. Sauveur stands at the mouth of the valley of Gavarnie, which is reached by crossing a beautiful iron bridge, completed in 1860, spanning an abyss 216 feet in depth. This bridge

is called the Pont Napoléon, having been projected by the Emperor, who a few years since resided for some time at St. Sauveur. It is built of stone and iron, the span of the arch measuring 138 feet; and the cost of the construction was upwards of £12,000. The rapidity of the Gave, and the abruptness of the mountain-walls, rendered the task a difficult and dangerous one; but the finished result is certainly a triumph of skill, whether regarded as a masterpiece of engineering or as a type of elegance and beauty. There is a winding path leading to the gorge under the bridge.

The construction of new roads, viaducts, and other improvements which are constantly met with in these parts, are no doubt due to the energy and enterprise of the Emperor, who has lately interested himself very much in the welfare of the inhabitants and visitors in this part of his dominions. Hardly a day passed but we saw engineering operations of some kind being carried on, new bridges being made, fresh paths being hollowed out of the rock, improved drainage being provided, and stone embankments being built. In a short time there will be good carriage-roads over many of the mountain-passes where before only bridle-paths of the roughest description existed.

From Luz to Barèges is a distance of 6 kilos. There is a good carriage-road, which is a gradual incline all the way. The scenery is very varied; sometimes we pass beautiful grassy slopes and pasture land, sometimes there is nothing but a desolate wilderness of rocks. Owing to the trees being so constantly enveloped in mist and clouds, the foliage is of a bright emerald-green.

Barèges stands 4200 feet above the level of the sea, and is composed of a long street of tall straggling houses. Some of the buildings are of solid masonry, to withstand the winter, and others are merely wooden booths temporarily erected for the season. The place has a most miserable appearance. The mineral waters of Barèges are very strong, and considered remarkably efficacious for wounds or diseases of the limbs. There is a military hospital established here; and the whole place is full of deformed and mutilated people, the majority of whom are of the humblest class. Both the inhabitants and the visitors appear to lead a very wretched life, and the village exerts a most depressing influence upon the tourist. Everybody—inhabitants and visitors alike—seems to be ill; and those who come here, if not ill already, appear soon to become so, from the

effects of the damp and dreary climate. The number of inhabitants in winter is not more than a hundred, while in summer they sometimes exceed two or three thousand. The first batch of sick soldiers arrive on the 1st June, although the warm weather scarcely commences before July. In winter the hotels and lodging-houses are locked up, and their proprietors descend to Luz or Argeliez, where the climate is milder.

During the last two miles of our walk we had been enveloped in a cold misty rain, which the raw mountain-air rendered very unpleasant. We were able, therefore, thoroughly to appreciate the warmth and comfort of the hotel, and drew round a glorious log fire in the coffee-room with a sense of enjoyment which was greatly increased by the consciousness of the inclement weather out of doors. The hotels are expensive, and certainly do not belong to those of the highest order, except as regards their geographical position. We went to the principal one, the Hôtel de France, where the prices charged were quite as high as those at Cauterets. Murray states that in winter bears and wolves frequently prowl about the streets; and we certainly should have had some difficulty in keeping the last-named animals from our

door, had we stayed at such an expensive hotel for any lengthened period. The only visitors at the Hôtel de France were a French lady and gentleman, who were very pleasant companions, the lady regaling us with a little music, if such it could be called, produced from a very ancient pianoforte, which I am afraid, judging from its constitution, had not the benefit of visiting a milder climate in winter time.

English is spoken at most of the large hotels in the Pyrenean spas, but of course totally ignored in the more retired districts. It is therefore a great relief in travelling not to be constantly subjected to that outlandish jargon that generally passes current for English at the hotels in Switzerland and Germany. There is something so annoying in being experimented upon by a half-fledged waiter, who persistently practises his cherished English upon you. In whatever language you address him, he continually replies with broken fragments of your native tongue, perhaps recommending to your notice some "bon trout fish" or "roast braten." I remember once lying awake half the night at an hotel in Lucerne concocting with a fellow traveller a plan for the discomfiture of a small *scious kellner*, who had been tormenting us the evening. When we demanded

breakfast in the morning, we ordered an omelette; and on his requesting to know in what way we desired it cooked, we told him we wanted a scrumptious one. After asking for a repetition of the order, he went into the kitchen, and evidently consulted the authorities there; but being unable to obtain the required information, he had no alternative but to request us to make our demand in French. We accordingly asked for an omelette *aux herbes*; and I have no doubt our friend added the new word to his incongruous stock of knowledge. On the Rhine and in the German watering-places Her Majesty's English is even more severely handled. Some time since I had my attention called to an advertisement in a German newspaper, which had been inserted especially for the benefit of English visitors. It is a fine specimen of *Anglo-Saxon*, and is as follows:—

“The pine-tree oil into capsule, containing five drops, is easy to gulp, dissolved himself into the stomach, and produced the wished effect without to let the smallest taste.”

“One diminished the dose by degrees of the amendment.”

A good road has lately been made over the Tourmalet, connecting Barèges with Grip and Bagnères de Bigorre, and the journey may

therefore be performed in a carriage. The entire distance to Bagnères de Bigorre is 38 kilomètres.

The Col of the Tourmalet is 10 kilos. from Barèges, a gradual ascent all the way. The French gentleman at the Hôtel de France, anxious to give us every information, had told us it was either 9 or 19 kilos. distant, he was not quite sure which. The valley above Barèges is barren and rocky, and resembles in appearance the Swiss valleys, the grass in the meadows, unlike that generally found in the Pyrenees, being scanty and thin; and the fields divided by low stone walls, contain a few loosely-built shepherds' huts. As we ascend, there is a charming view of the Pic du Midi in front. At a distance of 3 kilos. from Barèges the valley divides, and the road, after making a *détour* to the right, again goes straight forward and zigzags up the side of a mountain which abruptly terminates the valley. On this road we met two Spanish peasants, whose whole amount of luggage appeared to consist of half-a-dozen skins filled with wine. Although they were remarkably rough and uncouth in appearance, and seemed rather queer sort of customers, they bade us good morning very pleasantly.

A thousand feet below the Col we encountered a great deal of snow, which in many places was knee-deep. The glare of the sun on the snow was so great that it was impossible to proceed further without putting on veils, with which we had fortunately provided ourselves. We were told that this year the fall of snow had been unusually great, but that the Tourmalet was generally covered with it till June. After ascending some steep zigzags, we turn to the right, through a narrow cutting, which is the summit of the Col, 7200 feet above the sea.

On starting from Barèges we had arranged to ascend the Pic du Midi from the Tourmalet, descending thence to Grip; but when we arrived at the top of the pass the clouds were so dense and the snow so deep that the path was extremely difficult to find. We ascended for some distance; but thinking it imprudent to penetrate any further through the mist unaccompanied by a guide, we relinquished the attempt. We were thus unable to obtain a view which is said to be one of the finest in the Pyrenees, and also lost our only chance of seeing the *Lac Bleu*, which is situated only a short distance from the summit of the Pic du Midi.

As we descended, the clouds cleared off a little, and the beautiful valley of Grip could be

seen stretching out for miles at our feet. The descent is very barren for the first 5 kilos; after that trees and shrubs begin to appear. At 9 kilos. from the Col the two Grip waterfalls are reached, the road crossing the streams by two pretty stone bridges. The first cascade is the finest, consisting of three separate falls, and can be best seen by ascending a few yards above the bridge. You have now a beautiful view of the valley: immediately below is a picturesque group of shepherds' huts, and further on the scattered village of Grip. As we descend still further, the valley assumes its true Pyrenean character, the mountain-slopes being covered with grassy lawns and forests of fine timber.

Grip is $22\frac{1}{2}$ kilos. from Barèges, and can be reached easily in five hours. It contains a small inn; but I would advise tourists to go on to Ste. Marie, 2 kilos. further, where better accommodation may be obtained.

Ste. Marie is a village at the entrance of the Grip valley, on the road between Bagnères de Bigorre and Arreau. To Bagnères the distance is 13 kilos.

To reach Arreau from Ste. Marie you turn to the right, making an acute angle with the road from Grip. There is a carriage-road all

the way. The road ascends gradually, keeping the stream on the left through a beautiful valley, and at 3 kilos. you pass a little village, the detached buildings having very much the appearance of English homesteads, with thatched roofs, large straw-yards, barns, outhouses, &c. In fact, the only point in which the village differed in its appearance was in the erection by the wayside of large wooden crosses, which are very numerous in this part of the country. At 7 kilos. from Ste. Marie the road becomes level, and the village of Paillole is reached, situated in a plain, and consisting of three inns and a few poor cottages. The road to Arreau ascends in zigzags behind the village, up a mountain clothed with a magnificent forest of dark pines. When the inns have been passed, the pedestrian may make a short cut across the plain and up the mountain, avoiding the village altogether. After ascending some little distance, there is a splendid view back through a gap in the trees, the path leading through groves of lofty pines, the branches of which meet overhead and sometimes obscure the sky altogether. The forest ends about a mile before reaching the Col, or, as it is sometimes called, the Hourquette d'Aspin, which is 6 kilos. distant from Paillole. On emerging from the

by many tortuous tourniquets; but by availing ourselves of the more direct footpaths, which frequently cross the road, we are enabled to reach the village in an hour and a half. The distance is very deceiving, the village sometimes appearing almost at our feet, and at other times further off than when it was first sighted. The only way of appreciating the distance you have descended is by looking back at the Col over which you have just passed: it gradually becomes smaller, until at last it appears but a notch in the mountain, the little auberge on the top being marked by a tiny dot. At last we reach the level road, and enter Arreau by an avenue of poplars.

CHAPTER VIII.

VAL D'AURE—CADÉAC—TRAMSAIGUES—VAL D'ARRAG-
NOUET—COL DE CAMBIEL—VAL DE CAMBIEL—VAL
D'HÉAS—GÉDRE—VAL DE GAVARNIE—BRÈCHE DE
ROLAND—CIRQUE DE GAVARNIE—ARGELLEZ.

ARREAU stands at the mouth of the Val d'Aure. It is a dirty little place composed of narrow streets. It was getting dusk as we entered, and we were therefore unable to make much choice in selecting our quarters. We found a modest little inn, the last house on the left hand of the street before crossing the bridge called the Hôtel Dulhomme. Here we were informed that there had been a fête in the village, and the visitors had eaten up all the provisions; so it was some little time before we could get anything to eat. The people, however, were very good and attentive; and notwithstanding their assurance that they could supply but a poor supper, we made a very good meal of soup, cutlets, grilled fowl, and a sweet omelette. During our journey, we made it a rule never to venture on a fowl, if it were at all possible to do without it, as to a hungry man it is always a delusive and expensive diet. Much

better confine one's self to a cutlet or a filet, or even an omelette, than to attempt to derive nourishment from a small dried-up mass of skin and bone, which is generally served up under the comprehensive name of *poulet*. Our score at this little inn amounted to five francs each, including a small stock of provisions for lunch. There is a larger hotel in the place called the Hôtel de France, but we, as humble pedestrians, found our own quite good enough.

There is little to see at Arreau; a quaint old church and several large water-mills turned by the stream which runs through the village comprise the whole of its attractions.

To ascend the Val d'Aure you do not cross the bridge but keep straight on, having the torrent on the left. There is a carriage-road as far as Tramesaigues. The scenery up the valley is magnificent, and the villages are prosperous and remarkably picturesque.

At 1 kilo. from Arreau we pass through the village of Cadéac, at the entrance of which there is a fine polished granite cross. There is no inscription on this cross; and, in reply to our inquiries as to why such a beautiful monument had been erected, we were told "because the *Commune* is very rich." A fine old ruin, on

a hill to the right of the road, overlooks the village; it is said to have been an ancient castle of the Templars, of whom there are many traces in the valley. Here, too, there is an old church or chapel of most curious construction; the high road runs right through the building, the altar and pulpit being on one side of the road, and on the other are rows of stone seats, arranged one above the other for the congregation. Altogether Cadéac is one of the quaintest and most interesting places that can be conceived, and any tourist staying at Arreau will do well to visit it, even if he does not propose exploring the valley any further.

Anzica, another picturesque little village, on the slope of a hill, is 4 kilos. from Arreau, and Guchen is another kilo. further on. The latter is a clean little hamlet with a small inn; and in the centre of the place there is a pretty stone fountain with a statue. The road along the valley is an excellent one, the bridges over which it passes being quite modern and built of stone with iron railings. There is a view in front of the Pic d'Arbizon and other lofty mountains which bar the passage of the valley.

To the village of Vielle (with a poor inn) is another 4 kilos., and here the valley opens considerably. The torrent becomes a broad sprawl-

ing stream, the country is flatter, and hamlets are seen dotted over the landscape. The valley divides, and a road runs off to the left leading over a pass into Spain. We continue through the village, leaving the main road, which turns to the left over a bridge at the entrance of the village and goes round by St. Lary. We skirt the mountains on the right of the valley, ascending through pretty shady lanes, and obtaining a fine view of the country below. This path is rather shorter than the main road, which runs up the centre of the valley and is very flat. About one kilo. past Vielle a hamlet is passed, with a dark mysterious-looking chapel quite open in front, and lighted from the top of the altar, something after the manner of St. Sulpice in Paris. Several other chapels of the same description are to be met with in this valley, all of which have an opening in front, whence the gloomy interior may be seen.

The villages and hamlets in the Val d'Aure somewhat resemble those in the valley of the Vorder Rhein, in the Canton of Graubünden, being ancient picturesque places, very much out of the way, and inhabited by peasants of the simplest kind; the inhabitants seem to possess very little knowledge, even of the val-

ley in which they dwell, and appear never to go beyond a mile or two of their own villages. Some peasants of whom we asked the way to Tramesaigues, when within three miles of that place, were unable to tell us; they had heard of Arreau and knew Vielle, but we could not obtain any information respecting the road up the valley.

Just before reaching Tramesaigues, which is a good hour's walk from Vielle, a view is obtained of the valley below, the torrent rushing through a rocky gorge, barely leaving room enough for the road to pass.

Tramesaigues is a picturesque village perched up some hundreds of feet to the left above the road on a steep grassy slope. It appears built on a pedestal, surrounded on all sides by high mountain-walls. There is a curious Templar church here, and an old ruined castle in a good state of preservation above the village. Some mineral-springs have their source in the village, and these have a great reputation among the inhabitants of the neighbouring hamlets; there is a small auberge here.

The carriage-road now ends, and is succeeded by a mule-path running on a shelf cut into the side of the mountain far above the torrent. After leaving Tramesaigues the valley becomes

very narrow, and appears quite blocked up on all sides. At one kilo. beyond the village we pass a solitary church perched up on a rock nearly 1000 feet above the stream, the only access to which appeared to be a narrow path leading nearly perpendicularly up the mountain, reminding one of the church mentioned in Schiller's poem of "Der Kampf mit dem Drachen:"

"Das Kirchlein kennst du, Herr, das hoch
Auf eines Felsenberges Joch,
Der weit die Insel überschanet,
Des Meisters kühner Geist erbauet.

* * * * *

Auf dreimal dreissig Stufen steigt
Der Pilgrim nach der steilen Höhe :
Doch, hat er schwindeind sie erreicht,
Erquickt ihn seines Heilands Nähe."

A little further on we cross a bridge and pass a pretty waterfall on our right, and then the valley opens again, the road being very rough and stony, and leading through bushes of box. The forests, which were previously composed of beech and chestnuts, now change to firs, giving the valley a more sombre appearance. After keeping in the middle of the valley for some distance, the road, or rather footpath (for into such has it now dwindled), descends gradually past scattered cottages and

poor farm-buildings. There are some slate-quarries at the head of the valley, and also a silver-mine, or, as we were told, an *argent-ferro* mine, worked by an English engineer.

The upper part of the Val d'Arragnouet, which possesses most charming scenery, is said to be the abode of many idiots, or *cagots*, as they are called. In the Pyrenees, as in Switzerland and other mountainous districts, some of the inhabitants are afflicted with goître and other unpleasant diseases, no doubt attributable to the water-supply of the country. There are ancient records still existing in which these poor people are described as belonging to a lower class of humanity; they were called *cagots*, and allowed to congregate only in certain places assigned to them, and on no account to mingle with their fellow creatures. Many accounts respecting these *cagots* are no doubt purely legendary, and others very much exaggerated. We met during the whole of our journey but two people suffering from goître, and these were between Argeliez and Lourdes, where the country is not remarkably mountainous; but it is in the principal Spas, during the season, that these poor creatures generally congregate for the purpose of begging. At the little church in Luz is shown a narrow door-

way, now bricked up, known as the Cagots' door, which formerly was used by these poor outcasts when attending divine service in that edifice.

Arragnouet, at the foot of the Col de Cambiel, is about an hour-and-a-half's walk from Tramesaigues. It is a Douanier station, and contains a poor auberge. We arrived here at noon, and immediately made inquiries for a guide to take us over the Col. The Douaniers, to whom we communicated our plan, wished to dissuade us from passing the Col the same day, as the snow was very deep; but as we were fortunate enough to find a good guide, we decided upon proceeding. We were supplied with some refreshment at the little auberge before starting, and while there the *Chef de la Douane*, who had been informed of our arrival, came in to inspect us. He was a nice old fellow, with a grizzled moustache, and was very anxious to have a talk, as strangers were no doubt somewhat rare in those parts. He several times commenced relating, for our special benefit, a story about how he himself had ascended the Col some twenty years ago, at about the same time of year, when the snow was as deep as at the present time; but although he began the tale

several times, he was always interrupted in some way, and never got any further. All the Douaniers of the station, to the number of four or five, called to see us ; and they stood around, admiring our light alpaca coats, our flannel shirts and flasks, examining them closely, and deliberating with one another as to their value, without taking much notice of the owners. Nearly all the village turned out to see us depart, with as much curiosity as if we were going to attempt the Maladetta or the Matterhorn. We had great difficulty in obtaining change for a twenty-franc piece to pay our score, as no single inhabitant seemed to be in possession of so much wealth ; and we certainly should have been in a most awkward predicament if the *Chef de la Douane* had not interrupted his interesting story, and departing with our Napoleon returned with the change in about ten minutes.

We found a guide quite necessary over the Col de Cambiel, as there is no beaten track, and the snow, during the last 2000 feet of the ascent, was very deep, and so soft that we plodded through it up to our knees, and in some places it reached above our hips. Although the height of the Col is but between 8000 and

9000 feet, our guide told us it was always covered with snow*. It took us $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours to ascend from Arragnouet.

Our guide, a young fellow of about twenty, was remarkably agile, and in capital spirits; he led the way, probing the snow at times cautiously with his stick before stepping forward, and now and then turning round to shout a cheery "*Allons Camarades*" whenever he saw us lagging a little way behind. Before starting he changed his boots for a pair of snow-shoes made simply of list and canvas, which enabled him to obtain a firm footing on the slippery rocks wherever it was at all practicable. He was well acquainted with the surrounding mountains, as he often went hunting in the neighbourhood; and he told us that his brother had that morning started with a party of villagers to shoot a bear, traces of which had been seen in the vicinity. He was very communicative, and talked with delight of the time when he would be called upon to serve his country as a soldier, and when he would be able to visit all the large towns in France.

On arriving at the summit our guide pointed us out the way down, and was anxious to re-

* In the Pyrenees the snow-line is higher than in Switzerland.

turn as soon as possible. He demanded ten francs for his trouble, but was very content to receive seven. From the top there is a fine view of the Mont Perdu and other snow-mountains, which seem almost within stone's throw ; but the bright glare of the sun was so strong that we could only remove our veils for a short time to enjoy the prospect.

We had rested but a few minutes when a dense mist, which had been collecting in the valley below, seemed to be rising rapidly, and warned us not to delay our descent any longer. We had scarcely commenced descending, as indicated by the guide, when we found ourselves enveloped in a thick cloud, and unable to see more than 20 yards ahead. Thus unfortunately losing all land-marks, there was no alternative but to descend blindly through the snow. This we did as cautiously as possible, halting every now and then to look out for dangerous places or to listen for the sound of running water. After descending for half an hour the snow became thinner, and here and there patches of black granite cropped up above the white surface ; and presently we heard the welcome sound of a stream. Following its course we soon made our way into the main valley, where the clouds were not so dense. Here we

were fortunate enough to meet a shepherd, who was quite delighted to see us, and we exchanged information. He told us to continue down the valley, the Val de Cambiel, keeping as near as possible to the torrent, which would lead into the Val d'Héas, at the mouth of which our goal, the village of Gédre, was situated. Acting on his instructions, we followed the stream till we came to a rustic bridge, which we crossed, the path thence being well marked. Keeping the stream on the right, we skirted the mountain, ascending a little, and presently came in view of the Val d'Héas, and further on of the Val de Gavarnie. Towards the end the valley contracts into a narrow rocky gorge, the steep mountain-walls on each side being clothed with firs. Fortunately the clouds cleared away a little, and gave us a peep of the beautiful Val d'Héas; but it was only for a moment, and then they came on thicker than before, obscuring everything around us. Gédre was reached in $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours from the top of the Col, the last half-hour's descent being very rugged and toilsome.

There are two small inns at Gédre, of which the one called the Hôtel des Voyageurs seemed the more promising, and on this house we accordingly bestowed our patronage. It was not

quite so comfortable perhaps as other village inns we had frequented, but still there was not much to complain of. It was the only place during our journey where we were at all troubled with specimens of entomology in the bed-furniture; and here, although not numerous, they were very voracious.

Our landlady was attentive, and served us a good dinner, consisting of seventeen lamb-chops (I counted them), with plenty of claret and lemonade. We invariably found the butter in these parts remarkably nice; and we obtained it so fresh that one morning they kept us waiting a quarter of an hour while it was being churned. Our bill here was very reasonable.

Gédre is situated in the middle of the lovely valley of Gavarnie, which here opens out into a large basin, extending for a distance of three miles. From Gédre there is a magnificent view up the valley of the Brèche de Roland and the Mont Perdu, covered with eternal snow.

There is a good road the whole distance of the valley of Gavarnie, as far as the village of that name. From Gédre to Gavarnie is 6 kilos.; and the scenery along the route is remarkably varied and attractive. Sometimes the road passes through a desolate wilderness, the bare

mountain-walls on each side closing in so as almost to choke up the pathway, and overshadowing the torrent, impart to it a dark and almost inky appearance. In other places the stream is of a bright blue tint, rippling through smiling little vales, with smoothly turfed meadows, which are ornamented with silver birch trees, and appear as trim and well kept as a gentleman's lawn. The beauty of these scenes is greatly enhanced by the snowy peaks which form the background; there are also some pretty waterfalls in this part of the valley. About $2\frac{1}{2}$ kilos. from Gédre the valley becomes very narrow, and is strewn with tremendous fragments of rock, which have been detached from the side of the mountain, and lie around the road in glorious confusion. Some of these boulders are nearly 100 feet cube, and the road is compelled to make a *détour* to avoid them. The snow-mountains now bar the end of the valley, and appear scarcely half a mile distant.

On approaching Gavarnie the valley becomes shallower, and the road winds considerably; five minutes before reaching the village there is a fine view to the right, through a break in the mountains, of the snowy Vignemale. It is through this gap or pass that a path leads to the Lac de Gaube, attainable in five hours.


The village of Gavarnie appears very suddenly at a turn in the road, and behind it is seen the Cirque de Gavarnie, abruptly terminating the valley. The Cirque, although of gigantic proportions, does not appear very large from here, but has the appearance of a large quarry, say of white and black marble. Its real size cannot be appreciated till one is actually surrounded by its walls.

There is a good inn at Gavarnie, and refreshments are supplied at a reasonable tariff. The greater part of the visitors are excursionists from Luz and St. Sauveur. By starting from these places early in the morning, and taking a carriage to the village, it is possible to visit the Cirque, or even the Brèche, and return home the same day. Gavarnie bears some resemblance to a Swiss village, the houses being built on different levels, and of various styles of architecture. There is an interesting old church in the village.

I regret to say that we here encountered our great disappointment, which altered the plan of our trip entirely. The route we had originally fixed upon was as follows: to cross the Brèche from Gavarnie to Torta, thence to the Baths of Penticosa, and on to Camfranc, by which means we should have obtained a good

view of the Pyrenees from the Spanish side. From Camfranc we purposed going to Jaca and Saragossa, returning to France by rail through Pampluna and San Sebastian. But alas ! on our arrival at Gavarnie we found ourselves further from the Spanish frontier than we had been a fortnight back ; and the *Chateaux d'Espagne* we had contemplated visiting vanished into thin air. We were too early in the season, there was too much snow, and no one had crossed the Brèche this year. In vain we protested that somebody must be the first to cross, and promised a good round sum for a guide ; we could find nobody to take us. On leaving the inn to walk to the Cirque, a girl told us that she had a brother who lived at the waterfall, and would guide us over. Our spirits revived at this, and we were soon at the little auberge in the Cirque. Here we met the young fellow, and he bargained to take us across if the way were at all practicable.

After getting a few necessities together we set off without loss of time. The first part of the ascent is very steep and rugged, and in many places we were obliged to go on all fours. This rocky wall continued for some distance, and we then began to cross a slope of soft snow. Before we were half across, our guide seemed to waver,



and asked us if we could not postpone our ascent for a week or so, as he feared the snow, which already reached our knees, would be impassable. Under these circumstances we thought it best to abandon the attempt, and accordingly descended, not having quite reached the top of the great waterfall. This was a serious discomfiture to us, as we had no alternative now, if we wished to see anything of the Spanish side, but to retrace our steps to Luz and Argeliez, and go round by Bayonne. We dismissed our guide with a gratuity; and I fancy he seemed glad to be out of the job. Before parting, he kindly explained to us that the reason of his desisting from the attempt was not so much on account of the probability of his patrons breaking their necks, but more from the fact that, in case of an accident, he might be declared *fautif* (incompetent); and his license to act as guide would then be revoked.

The Cirque is situated about three miles from the village. There is a crowd of women and donkeys in front of the inn, ready to guide the tourist to it; but as there is a good path, the way is easily found without any assistance. You continue the road straight past the hotel, through the village, incline to your left when past the houses, over a grassy

plain, keeping the stream on your left hand. About a mile from the village the stream is crossed by a rustic bridge near a cascade, and the path then becomes rough and stony. The Cirque is an immense cavity scooped out of the side of a mountain. There are some very high waterfalls trickling down the sides, one of which is said to be 1200 feet high; but, owing to the comparatively small quantity of water, they are not particularly grand, although the great height from which they fall is evident from the long time occupied by the water in reaching the bottom. When we visited it, the Cirque was covered with snow.

We met a party of French excursionists here from Bordeaux—a very noisy lot, who had come from Luz that morning. They were much surprised to hear that we contemplated making a tour among the mountains on the Spanish side without being furnished with revolvers. One of the gentlemen very coolly asked us, before we had entered into conversation with them scarcely two minutes, what the expense of our trip to the Pyrenees would be. He was asked to guess, and he hazarded *cent guinees*. We told him, in reply, that the journey might cost us double that amount, but we did not

think that it would. I am quite convinced he would not have believed us had we told him the exact total of our expenses, which amounted to rather less than twenty pounds each.

On going back to Gavarnie we had some refreshment at the little inn before proceeding on our return journey; and here I may mention that at any little secluded village where we required anything to eat, there was always plenty of food to be had. The bread is certainly not made solely of wheat, nor is it perfectly white; but it is equal to that obtained in Swiss villages, and far superior to much I have eaten in Germany. Milk, eggs, and good wine are always obtainable, and generally an excellent cup of chocolate.

Our inability to cross the Brèche brought us to a perfect full stop, as our former plan of operations had become useless. After a short deliberation we decided upon returning to Bayonne as soon as possible, and getting into Spain by rail. We accordingly shouldered our knapsacks without loss of time, and faced about for Luz. Gèdre was soon passed; and we then entered the lower part of the Gavarnie valley, which we had not before visited. It is very beautiful, and totally unlike the upper portion, where the mountains are rocky and barren;

here all the slopes are clothed with verdure, and the meadows are quite gay with colours, being covered with daisies, buttercups, red clover, and blue forget-me-nots. Some distance below Gèdre the valley opens out into a large grassy plain, in the middle of which is a row of little white huts, dotted along the side of the stream. About a mile beyond, the torrent is crossed by a fine wooden bridge, at a tremendous height above the water. The remainder of the valley to St. Sauveur is a narrow gorge, of fearful depth, with steep walls of rock rising precipitately on both sides. Now and then a peep is obtained of the torrent, foaming and chafing many hundred feet below the road. At the entrance of this defile, about half a mile from St. Sauveur, is a stone commemorating the making of the road; and a little further on we came in sight of the beautiful stone bridge which crosses the gorge at St. Sauveur. The distance from Gavarnie to St. Sauveur is 19 kilometres.

We took the direct road to Luz, in order to have a good view of St. Sauveur on the hill opposite. A prettier picture cannot be imagined than is presented by this bright little spa, situated on a grassy slope, with its white *buildings* peeping out from among the trees.

They were cutting the grass as we passed ; and the scent of the new-mown hay and wild flowers in the balmy evening air rendered the spot a perfect paradise. We lingered here for some time ; but the knowledge that we had still a good deal of work before us compelled us to hasten onward. Our object was, if possible, to reach Argellez the same night ; for as we should be travelling by rail all the next day, we did not mind overexerting ourselves a little ; besides, we were sure of good accommodation at our old quarters. We therefore left Luz at a good round pace, and returned down the beautiful valley to Pierrefitte ; here we had half-an-hour's rest before proceeding to Argellez, which was reached at ten o'clock. We were welcomed by our old landlady like prodigal sons, and in a quarter of an hour were comfortably enjoying an excellent supper, which, besides other good things, included a large bowl of *chocolat au lait*.

We did not observe any visitors' books at the hotels we frequented, except in one or two places. I always like to glance through these relics of past travellers, as they often contain a scrap of useful information or some anecdote or doggrel verses which are worth perusing. The few books we looked into were, however, very innocent of anything of this sort—either, I

suppose, because the weather is generally fine in this part of the world, and tourists have therefore something better to do, or because travellers are not very abundant. The only poetical effusion we could find was in German, in honour of the pretty waitress of the hotel. I wonder whether our melancholy friend at Bayonne wrote it. It ran thus :—

Mägdelein,
Wärst du mein,
Dann würd' kein
Froher sein.

There is a diligence from Argeliez to Lourdes (12 kilos.), the expense of which is 2 francs. The lower part of the Val d'Argeliez is broad and flat, with a brawling stream in the middle. In some parts it is rather pretty, but would, I think, hardly repay walking. On the right bank of the river, about halfway between Lourdes and Argeliez there is a fine ruined castle.

Lourdes is a busy market-town, with two or three good inns. There is railway communication to Tarbes, but it has not yet been completed to Pau.

We intended taking a conveyance to Pau and going thence to Bayonne; but as the price de-

manded for a calèche was more than we were disposed to give, there was no alternative but to go to Bayonne by rail in a very roundabout manner, through Tarbes and Morcenx. There is a diligence from Lourdes to Pau, fare 6 francs, but it starts early in the morning.

CHAPTER IX.

IRUN—PASSAGES—VITORIA.

PASSING the night at the Hôtel du Commerce at Bayonne, we started at six next morning for Spain, taking tickets for Vitoria. The railway runs very close to the Bay of Biscay, glimpses of which are obtained at intervals. The Pyrenees stretch right down into the Bay; and it is only by going in and out between the mountains that the railway is enabled to pass between the two countries. The mountains diminish in height as they approach the sea; but here they are quite two or three thousand feet high.

France is divided from Spain by the Bidassoa, a river about thirty yards wide where it is crossed by the railway. The passage of this river was effected by Wellington, in 1813, very near the spot where the railway-bridge spans the stream. The French army, commanded by Marshal Soult, was encamped on the French side, and, owing to the depth of the river, and likewise to the fact that Soult believed the greater part of Wellington's army to be posted higher up the stream, they considered themselves safe from attack. Some Spanish fisher-

men, however, acquainted Wellington with the existence, at low water, when the tide falls as much as sixteen feet, of three fords just opposite Hendaye; and by these means he was enabled to cross the river and obtain a footing on French soil before the enemy could fire a shot in defence.

The Spanish custom-house is situated at Irun, across the Bidassoa, and the French one at Hendaye, the last station in France. On entering Spain all passengers alight and change trains at Irun. The luggage is searched, but no passports are demanded. There is a good *buffet* here and a *Bureau de Change*, where Spanish money may be obtained at a fair rate of exchange. The Spanish coinage is at present in a very unsatisfactory state. The recognized mode of calculating is by reals and cents—one hundred cents being equal to a real ($2\frac{1}{2}d.$), and a hundred reals going to an Isabellino, (about one pound sterling). A dollar, or duro, is worth five pesetas (a peseta being equal to four reals). Besides these coins there are cuartos, thirty-five of which go to a peseta, and eight and a half to a real: it is quite as common to reckon by cuartos in Spain as it is by sous in France.

The first station of importance is Passages.

We stopped here a short time on our return journey. It is very prettily situated at the foot of the mountains. The houses are built on the banks of an inland lake, which has a narrow outlet into the sea, guarded by a fort, thus forming a beautiful natural harbour: it is probably not very deep, as it seems little used by shipping. Here we first made acquaintance with the Spanish priesthood, who somewhat resemble the French clergy in their dress, with the exception that they are much dirtier, and wear a long black hat, like a rolled-up wafer-cake, about 30 inches long by 10 wide. I could not refrain from smiling on first beholding one of these gentlemen—not that his appearance suggested to me the horrors of the Inquisition, but on account of his perfect resemblance to Tagliafico when playing Basilio in the “Barber of Seville.” Passages was used by Wellington as a dépôt for military stores during the Peninsular War.

A little further on we come to San Sebastian; but of this place I will speak on my return journey.

The country we pass through is very mountainous and woody, most of the trees being chestnuts—Spanish ones, of course. The villages, owing to the flat roofs of the houses,

have a Swiss or even a Chinese appearance. The railway ascends a steep incline, amounting altogether to 2000 feet; and between the stations of Beasain and Alsasna there are as many as twenty-four tunnels. At times the train appears to have lost its way among the mountains, tunnelling through some and circumnavigating others, in order to get free again. As you emerge from a tunnel and cross a beautiful valley, or are carried along on a narrow shelf cut into the side of a mountain, you obtain extensive views of the country around; and now and then magnificent panoramas are seen of chains of wooded hills rising one behind another, of different shades and tints, bathed in glorious sunshine. Our only disappointment is, that there is not sufficient time to feast one's eyes on the charming views of hill and dale which follow each other in rapid succession. The railway-journey reminds one of that over the Jura near Pontalier; but the scenery here is grander, and the views more extensive.

As we pass by the little stations on the line, stopping five minute at each, we cannot help comparing them with those of our own country. The station-masters and officials are grand and pompous enough in France; but they are nothing as compared with those of Spain. At a

moderate-sized railway-station, where at home there would probably be a station-master, a policeman, and three or four porters to do the work, we find the establishment controlled by a perfect staff of uniformed officials. There is a long row of offices on the platform—one for the station-master (or, as he is here styled, the *Géfe de stacion*), the under station-master, the chief of the telegraphic department, the chief of the gendarmerie and of the surveillance of the Administration, whatever that may mean, besides an office for baggage and reclamations. Of course with such complicated machinery it takes some time to start a train, and there is consequently a considerable delay at each station.

We came from Bayonne with a Spanish gentleman, a very agreeable companion, who imparted to us many useful hints. He gave us a long practical lesson in Spanish, explaining several words and sentences, the pronunciation of which we had not quite mastered, and communicated to us other important information. This was indeed very welcome to us, as our only knowledge of life in Spain had been acquired many years ago by a careful perusal of the wonderful adventures and exploits of Don Quixote, which, however much they might in-

terest and entertain the reader, are scarcely calculated to convey to his mind a correct idea of the ordinary manners and customs of the Spaniards at the present day. This gentleman was going to Saragossa, and therefore changed carriages at a junction some little distance before we came to Vitoria. Before leaving, he kindly introduced us to a lady and gentleman in the same carriage, who were going to Vitoria and were acquainted with the French language—the gentleman, like most Spanish gentlemen, being very sallow and ugly, and the lady, like most Spanish ladies, very bright and pretty. The lady was dressed in the ordinary Spanish style, in a black-lace mantilla, worn so as to answer the purpose of a shawl and veil, dropping down over the top of the head and covering the upper part of her face; she carried a fan, which, when opened and held before her mouth, concealed her features altogether, with the exception of her eyes, which sparkled through the veil. She was very chatty, and talked to us all the way, pitying us very much (it was very pleasant being pitied by such a soft voice); “for she knew,” she said, “how very disagreeable it was to enter a country for the first time without being acquainted with the language.” She offered us her protection, and

promised to ensure our going to the right hotel at Vitoria. I was sorry to find, when we arrived at that town, that, although her intentions were very kind, the assistance she afforded did not benefit us so much as I could have wished. At the exit-door of the station there were crowded together, as is generally the case, a mob of porters, touters, and hangers-on, ready to snap up any stray traveller they could lay their hands upon, and only prevented from entering the station by a couple of gendarmes placed at the door for that purpose. On our appearance these wolves began to howl with excitement at the prospect of our falling into their hands; and we had some difficulty in evading their outstretched claws. But this disturbance did not affect the Spanish lady in the least degree (her husband was occupied with some friends on the platform), and, without approaching the door, she addressed the crowd from a distance in a most deliberate manner. As far as we could understand from her gestures and from a familiar word now and then, she explained that we were Englishmen who had never been in Spain before, who did not know the language, and were quite unacquainted with the country. As the lady mentioned these several points the mob quite yelled

with delight; and one or two of the foremost, unable to restrain themselves any longer, made a descent upon us. Resistance was of no use; and luckily two of the biggest gained possession of us; and we soon found ourselves out of the crowd and inside a large omnibus, triumphantly guarded by our captors. I am proud to say that during all this time we behaved very gallantly: we never for a moment lost our temper; and when in the omnibus, we had still fortitude enough left to smile as we bowed to our Cicerone on our departure. On our arrival at the hotel we asked the proprietor to pay for our conveyance, thereby, I am afraid, rather disappointing our friends the wolves.

Vitoria is a fine town, containing, I should think, about twenty thousand inhabitants. We stopped at the principal hotel in the place, the *Parador de Postas*, kept by M. Pallares, which we found moderate and very comfortable. We were charged 32 reals a day, everything included. There was table d'hôte twice a day, very well served, the only objection to the same being that the gentlemen smoked an occasional cigarette between the courses; but there were no ladies present.

Vitoria is an ancient town, and was formerly surrounded by a wall; but this has now become

incorporated with the houses, and is only distinguishable at certain parts. In the middle of the town, on an eminence, stands the cathedral. It contains some fine groined arches; but the stained-glass windows, although very brilliant, are not remarkable either for size or beauty. There is a fine organ and some beautiful marble monuments. We were fortunate enough to hear, or rather see, grand mass performed by the Bishop of Vitoria; it was conducted in pretty nearly the same manner as in France, with the exception that the altar is not regarded as of so much importance during the ceremony, and the effect is much less imposing. An extensive view of the battle-field and surrounding country is seen from the tower of the cathedral.

Three narrow streets surround the cathedral, one below the other. Many of the houses are built in the Elizabethan style, of red brick, one story projecting above the other, with windows composed of small diamond panes of glass. Several of the old houses have a turret or tower at each of their four corners, the old type of nobility; and many of them have a large coat of arms carved in stone above the doorway. The houses are all numbered, odd numbers on one side of the street and even

ones on the other. There are several churches in the town, the interiors of which are not remarkable for beauty, being mostly whitewashed and gilt. The town contains a public garden, a theatre, and an arena for bull-fights. The principal square is called the *Prado del Re*; it is surrounded by colonnades, after the manner of the Palais Royal at Paris, and is the favourite promenade in the evening,

There are few conveyances, and those of the most primitive kind; the carts and waggons are of a very rough description, the wheels being generally large disks of wood attached to the body of the cart. There are two striking peculiarities in the streets of Vitoria—the great number of dogs (which do the scavengers' work), and the bright-red *berret* caps worn by all the boys.

A bull-fight had taken place the day before our arrival; and when we visited the arena the broken wood-work, disordered properties, and gory soil bore testimony to the severity of the recent fight. It was a large open amphitheatre, the ring or circus measuring perhaps 100 feet in diameter. The ring is surrounded by a double barrier, one within the other, at a distance of four feet apart, the space between the two wooden fences being used by the atten-

dants when not actually engaged in the ring. The inner barrier is not a continuous circular wall, but is divided into six or eight portions which do not meet but overlap each other in such a manner as to allow a space about 18 inches wide, by which the performers may at any time escape from the circus into the passage between the two partitions, the bull of course being unable to follow through such a narrow exit. Round the ring are seats ranged one above the other as in amphitheatre, and behind these are a row of covered boxes. A gentleman whose acquaintance we had made at the hotel, and who was kind enough to accompany us on many of our exploring-expeditions, explained to us the manner in which the bull-fights were conducted. He stated that, at a grand performance, twelve bulls are always slaughtered, but on ordinary occasions it is understood that half that number only will be killed, unless, indeed, a special number is specified in the announcements. On an average each bull kills three horses, so that the spectators have the satisfaction of witnessing the death of 24 animals at each performance. The expense attendant on one of these exhibitions is of course very great. It is true the horses used are only fit for the knackers, fed up for

the purpose a fortnight before the fight, and these are estimated at from £6 to £8 each; the bulls cost from £30 to £40 each, thus giving a total of at least £300. There is, besides, the Matador's fee, which generally amounts to £20 or £30, and the wages of the Piccadors and attendants. The dead animals realize but a very small sum. In order to meet the cost of the entertainment, the prices of admission are naturally rather high, ranging from one or two pesetas to half an Isabellino.

The entertainment commences by a procession of the officers, attendants, and mules attached to the ring, and permission is requested of the chief personage present to begin the performance. By way of reply the key of the stable containing the bulls is thrown into the ring, and, the attendants having withdrawn, the first bull, gaily decorated with ribbons, is allowed to enter, his arrival being announced by a flourish of trumpets. Two mounted Piccadors now make their appearance furnished with long lances, at the end of which are short spikes. These remain at the sides of the ring, the horses having been blindfolded to prevent them from seeing the bull. The Piccadors are oftentimes gentlemen amateurs; and our friendly guide told us that he had assumed the garb many a

time. They are very gaily dressed, and have their limbs protected by bandages and metal supports, a precaution very necessary to protect them from injury in case the horse happens to fall upon them. When the bull observes the Piccador it immediately makes towards him, the Piccador repelling the animal if possible by planting his lance against the shoulders of the bull. After two or three attacks the bull generally succeeds in goring the horse, which immediately breaks together, and is at once put out of its misery and dragged off by a team of mules. I remarked upon the cruelty of subjecting old worn-out horses to this barbarous treatment; but my friend argued that it was a more merciful way to kill them thus than torturing them by making them drag cabs about the streets as they do in London. After the Piccadors have played with the bull for some time, the audience testifying to their skill or clumsiness by loud bravos or shouts of disapprobation, they retire, and, if the animal is not considered to have been sufficiently goaded, a number of attendants enter at different points with coloured mantles, which they wave in front of the bull; or, if these do not prove sufficiently harassing, coloured ribbons, attached to sharp darts or hooks, are

planted with much skill and dexterity on the bull's neck and shoulders. Finally these retire, and the Matador enters amid loud cheering. With a long sword he advances slowly and cautiously towards the raging animal, and, watching his opportunity, plunges his weapon behind its ears, and the dying bull is then drawn off with much cheering and beating of drums. The Matador is of course the chief personage of the arena; and a skilful one sometimes obtains as much as £50 for his day's services.

The climate of Vitoria is never very warm, even in summer, as it is situated 1900 feet above the level of the sea.

CHAPTER X.

THE BATTLE OF VITORIA—TOLOSA—SAN SEBASTIAN.

We had a long ramble about the surrounding country to explore the battle-field of 1813, and to trace out, if possible, the landmarks where the battle was fought. Had we known it at the time, we might have saved ourselves much trouble and fatigue by taking the rail a short distance out and then walking back to Vitoria. If the mid-day train were taken as far as Nanclores, one might easily return over the battle-field to Vitoria in the evening, whereas it requires a hard day's work to do the whole of the journey on foot, and the country around is mostly flat and barren. However, our exertions were well repaid by the fact that we were able to distinguish many spots mentioned by Napier in his description of the battle, and thus obtained a good clue to the position of both armies.

Although Wellington had before won many great and important victories in the Peninsula, at Ciudad Rodrigo, Badajoz, and Salamanca, they were none of them productive of such decisive

results as the battle of Vitoria. His former triumphs, although of the most brilliant character, had not materially advanced his position in the country ; but the defeat of the French at Vitoria, followed as it was in the same year by the victory at the Pyrenees, the capture of San Sebastian, the surrender of Pampluna, and the complete evacuation of Spain by the French, proved to be the commencement of a series of the most glorious and uninterrupted successes.

It was on the morning of the 21st of June, 1813, that Wellington, with the allied army, numbering about 80,000 men, and consisting of English, Spanish, and Portuguese, came up with the French, strongly posted, with their rear against the town. Wellington knew that the result of this battle would be of the most vital importance ; he knew that, if he succeeded in defeating the enemy, there would then be no further obstacle to be overcome in driving them from the Peninsula, there being no rallying point of importance between Vitoria and the northern boundary of Spain ; at the same time he was fully aware that, if he experienced a reverse, the safety of his army would be exceedingly precarious, as it would be most difficult for him to cover his retreat. He had, however, perfect confidence as to the issue of

the battle; and his army was in good health and in capital spirits.

The French army, under the command of King Joseph, were slightly inferior in number to their antagonists; but the position they had chosen was a remarkably strong and defensible one. The town of Vitoria is situated in a large basin or plain, affording ample space for the manœuvring of the army, which had been drawn up in such a manner that its left was protected by the Puebla mountains, and the front and right by the river Zadora, which here makes a bend at right angles. In this position the French awaited the attack of Wellington.

The main body of the allies advanced from the south; General Hill had been detached to attack the village of Puebla on the extreme left of the French line, and Graham had been ordered to attack from the Orduna road on the right of the enemy. The centre, under Wellington, was to effect the passage of the Zadora and attack the enemy in front, by crossing the bridge of Nanclares. While the main body was advancing, a Spanish peasant informed Wellington that a bridge over the Zadora at Tres Puentes, on the right flank of the enemy, *had* been left unguarded; and a brigade was

therefore instantly directed to this point. The men passed the narrow bridge at a running pace, and, mounting a rising ground drew up on the enemy's side of the river, actually between them and their outposts, before the French were well aware of the movement. A regiment of cavalry likewise passed the bridge in single file and drew up behind the infantry, thereby gaining a substantial position on that side of the river. By one o'clock General Hill had succeeded in obtaining possession of Puebla, pushing back the French on their main body; and at the same time the guns of Graham's division could be heard opening fire further up the Zadora. The centre division now engaged the enemy across the river, and a body of riflemen, forming part of the English brigade, which had already crossed the river, advanced between the French cavalry and the river, taking their light troops in flank, and engaging them so closely that the English artillery on the opposite bank, thinking the darkly clothed troops were enemies, played upon both alike. This spirited attack of the riflemen enabled other divisions to cross the river, and forced the French to withdraw from their original line of defence. Hill had by this time completely forced back the left of the French, and was enabled to advance

in line with the other brigades upon the retreating enemy. At six o'clock the French reached the last defensible height, one mile in front of Vitoria, and here they made a gallant stand, the battle becoming quite stationary, when suddenly an English division carried one of the hills on the left, and the heights were immediately abandoned. There was nothing now but a large plain between the victorious allies and the town of Vitoria; but the roads leading from the town were so blocked up by waggons and artillery, that pursuit was very difficult.

With regard to the results of the battle, Napier sums up as follows:—"The French escaped with comparatively little loss of men; but, to use Gazan's words, they lost all their equipages, all their guns, all their treasure, all their stores, all their papers; so that no man could prove how much pay was due to him; generals and subordinate officers alike were reduced to the clothes on their backs, and most of them were barefooted. Never was an enemy more hardly used by its commander, for the soldiers were not half beaten, and yet never was a victory more complete. The trophies were innumerable. The French carried off but *two pieces* of artillery from the battle. Jour-

dan's bâton of command, a stand of colours, one hundred and forty-three brass pieces, two-thirds of which had been used in the fight, all the parcs and dépôts from Madrid, Valladolid, and Burgos, carriages, ammunition, treasure, everything fell into the hands of the victors. The loss in men did not, however, exceed six thousand, including some hundreds of prisoners; the loss of the allies was nearly as great, the gross number being 5176 killed, wounded, and missing. The spoil was immense; and to such extent was plunder carried, principally by the followers and non-combatants (for with some exceptions, the fighting troops may be said to have marched upon gold and silver without stooping to pick it up), that of five millions and a half of dollars, indicated by the French accounts to be in the money-chests, a fiftieth part only came to the public. Wellington sent fifteen officers, with power to stop and examine all loaded animals passing the Ebro and the Duero, in hopes to recover the sum so shamefully carried off: and this disgraceful conduct was not confined to ignorant and vulgar people; some officers were seen mixed up with the mob, contending for the disgraceful gain."

"In this campaign of six weeks, Wellington, marching with one hundred thousand men six

hundred miles, passed six great rivers, gained one decisive battle, invested two fortresses, and drove a hundred thousand veteran troops from Spain."

Returning from Vitoria we stopped a short time at Tolosa. Our object in visiting this place was to make an excursion into the neighbouring country, which we had been given to understand was very pretty, and likewise to see a bull-fight. Unfortunately the latter only takes place a dozen times during the summer; and as the next performance would not be given for ten days, we were unable to be present at one of these national exhibitions.

There is some fine scenery near Tolosa; but the mountains are not very high. The atmosphere was remarkably clear, and from an eminence we enjoyed a splendid panoramic view of the Pyrenees. The trees and shrubs are rather stunted; and although the foliage presents greater variety of colour than on the French side, it is neither so soft nor so verdant, and fine grassy meadows are of very rare occurrence: this is no doubt owing to the climate and the dryness of the soil. On our way we met several teams of pack-mules, dressed out *with* coloured trappings, coming from the

mountain villages. The muleteer, habited in a picturesque though very dirty costume, leads the way, guiding the first mule of the team, which consists of four or five animals fastened together one after the other in single file. A cavalcade of this description coming over the brow of a mountain gives a truly Spanish character to the landscape.

At a short distance from Tolosa we had the satisfaction of witnessing a review of Spanish troops to the number of about two thousand. They were all very young men, not more than ten per cent. of them wearing a beard of any kind; they were clothed in red trousers and dark-blue tunics, the latter being worn very long, and giving them anything but a smart appearance. A band played continually during the whole of the manœuvres, a pause being made in the music every time a new command was being issued. There were four officers to each company, their rank being denoted by long chevrons extending from the elbow to the shoulder, one, two, or three chevrons distinguishing respectively the sublieutenant, the lieutenant, and the captain. The field-officers wore their insignia of rank round the cuff, like our naval officers,—one, two, or three stripes denoting major, lieutenant-colonel, or colonel.

These troops were, I believe, some of those which revolted a day or two afterwards, when we were fortunately over the border.

From Tolosa we took the train to San Sebastian, the first town of importance when entering Spain by railway from France. San Sebastian is rising in fame as a watering-place, and hotels are becoming very plentiful. Most visitors to Biarritz and St. Jean de Luz make a point of taking a day's excursion into Spain; and San Sebastian is generally selected for visiting, on account of its historic associations, and its proximity to the French frontier. In the town itself there is scarcely anything worthy of note; but a visit to the citadel will be found very interesting. It is situated on a high mound rising precipitately from the sea; and from the summit there is an extensive and very beautiful view: on the one side you may see the Pyrenean range rising from the sea-coast at your feet, stretching far away till the hazy outlines of the mountains are lost in the distance, and on the other side you have the blue Bay of Biscay.

San Sebastian has obtained a mournful celebrity in the annals of British warfare. It is peculiarly situated as a stronghold, and, after the repulse of the French at Vitoria, General Graham

was ordered by Wellington to besiege the place and carry it by assault; but, owing to the immaturity of the plans, and the hurried manner in which the siege was conducted, the attempt proved unsuccessful. Some time later another attack was made on the fortress. Wellington was so vexed at the previous failure that he called for fifty volunteers from each of the fifteen regiments besieging the place to act as a storming-party. After a very gallant and determined resistance, when the garrison had been reduced to a third of its original number, the French commander consented to surrender, and was allowed to march out with the honours of war. The survivors of the storming-party were privileged to wear a large S embroidered on the arm, this being the first instance of any distinction being worn in the British army for gallantry in battle. On a grassy plateau near the top of the hill may be seen the white tombstones which mark the resting-places of the gallant volunteers who perished in the assault.

The town is well seen from the eminence, whence it seems to have been built on geometrical principles, so straight and regular are the streets.

There are some pretty walks among the hills in the neighbourhood of San Sebastian. One

evening stroll especially I remember with pleasure past the town to the right of the highway leading into France. The heat had been so oppressive during the day that exertion of any kind seemed impossible; and it was not till somewhat late in the afternoon that we ventured out. After leaving the highroad the scenery is very varied and beautiful, the path leading over wooded hills affording delightful prospects, and through quiet shady lanes, where the beauty of the wild flowers was only equalled by their fragrance. We leave the beaten track and walk across country to a rising ground, where a bright little patch of green turf peeps out from among a cluster of large chestnut-trees and seems particularly inviting. Here, with not a habitation within sight, not a sound to be heard but the breeze murmuring through the trees, surrounded on all sides by steep wooded slopes and dark shadowy vales, we seem quite shut out from the world. Above is one of the brightest and bluest of skies; and before us stretches an extended panorama of hills covered with the dark foliage of that gigantic forest which stretches almost uninterruptedly from the Bay of Biscay to the shores of the Mediterranean, forming a landscape of the grandest description. It is with a feeling

of the greatest relief, after the hot and close atmosphere of the town, that we sit down on the soft turf under the overhanging branches of an old chestnut, where we can watch the setting sun going down behind the trees, and feel the cool evening breeze upon our faces. As we contemplate the subdued grandeur of the scene (a perfect emblem of repose and peace) it is not without a sense of regret that we think of the short period yet remaining to us of our holiday time; a few days more and our rambles will be at an end, our freedom will cease, and a thousand miles will lie between us and the lovely prospect we are now enjoying. A week hence will see us back again at our everyday work in our customary harness, but, let us hope, with a renewed store of life, health, and vigour, sufficient to last for some time to come. Still, if this quiet solitude calls up into our mind reflections tinged with sadness and regret, it exerts at the same time an influence over our minds which makes us resolve to go back to the battle of life with renewed energy and determination. The spot seems to possess a powerful fascination, and we would fain remain longer within its lovely precincts; but the shadows of the trees, which have been lengthening more and more, have now totally disappeared,

and the sun has long since gone down, leaving nothing but a golden-fringed cloud on the horizon to mark the place of its descent, and we must delay no more. Silently and thoughtfully we make our way back to the pathway, and retrace our steps in the direction to where a few glimmering lights already mark the position of the town.

The hotels in North Spain we found cleanly, comfortable, and remarkably reasonable. The fare was good; but you are expected to take your meals at certain fixed hours at the table d'hôte, otherwise you may have some trouble in getting anything to eat. The bed-rooms were well furnished, and, in some cases, handsomely and tastefully fitted up. The *Buffets* at the railway stations are likewise excellently managed, and refreshments are supplied at a very moderate rate.

From San Sebastian we returned to Biarritz. The Spanish train, which, by the by, runs on a broad gauge, carries the passengers into French territory to Hendaye, where luggage is examined.

CHAPTER XI.

BIARRITZ—BORDEAUX—PARIS.

BIARRITZ is about twelve miles from the frontier of Spain and five from Bayonne; the railway station is two miles distant from the town. Visitors coming from the north find it more convenient to take a conveyance from Bayonne to Biarritz, as the journey by road is easily performed in three quarters of an hour, while there is generally an interval of two hours at Bayonne between the arrival of the Bordeaux train and the departure of the one for Biarritz.

There are not more than three or four good hotels in Biarritz, but these are very large ones. Being an imperial watering-place, the charges are of course rather high. We put up at the Hôtel de France, where we found the accommodation good, the charges comparatively moderate, and the *cuisine* excellent. From the 1st July to the end of October is the popular time for visiting Biarritz, when it is said to be very crowded.

Biarritz has a somewhat Spanish appearance; many of the buildings are built in the Spanish style, and most of the inscriptions, notices, &c.

are posted up both in the French and Spanish languages. The Villa Eugénie, the residence of the Empress, occupies a prominent position on the sea-shore; but the estate has a remarkably bare and unfinished appearance, owing to the total absence of any trees or shrubs in the grounds. The park is not very extensive, but extends down to the beach, enabling the Empress, who is very fond of bathing, to indulge her aquatic tastes without going far from home.

The town has but a narrow sea-frontage, and consists chiefly of one long street, running inland from the *Vieux Port*, and several detached buildings grouped round the old-lighthouse hill. There are some fine shops and cafés, and a large casino containing billiard-, reading-, card-, and ball-rooms, and likewise a theatre. Entrance to the casino is obtained by payment at the doors or by subscription. The town is full of lodging-houses; but the demand is so great in the season, that they are very expensive.

Although of rather small dimensions, Biarritz is an exceedingly pretty watering-place. It is built on two or three little rocky bays. On the extreme right is the lighthouse, on a headland three hundred feet above the beach, whence a fine view of the Spanish coast and the Pyrenees may be obtained. The cliffs are in some parts very

high, and of a dark chalky consistence, with strata of flints. The rock is so soft that the sea is continually undermining it, forming picturesque caves, grottos, and arches. Many parts of the rock have become detached from the mainland, and form groups of islands near the shore. On the beach there are several beautiful stalactite caverns, with natural seats formed of ledges of flint, which the sea has laid bare; these grottos afford a delightfully cool shelter from the heat of the sun. Some fine promenades have been made, and three large bathing-establishments erected, which, together with the curious and picturesque natural attractions of the place, render Biarritz very attractive; besides, the mere fact of its being patronized by royalty is sufficient to make it highly popular and fashionable. Several of the promenades stretch some distance into the sea, connecting many of the little detached rocks with the mainland. There is a large engineering-establishment for making cement blocks, which are used for forming the foundation of these promenades; the blocks, which are very large, measuring $12 \times 7 \times 8$ ft., and weighing about 40 tons, are taken by means of a tramway to the edge of the cliff, and then sunk to form a solid base.

Bathing is indulged in twice a day, in the morning and evening, before meals. The charge for a bath is half a franc ; and this sum includes a *costume de bain*, &c. Having assumed their bathing-dresses, both ladies and gentlemen descend to the beach for the purpose of chatting, promenading, and bathing. The favourite bathing-establishment is the centre one, at the *Vieux Port*, built at the head of a little bay of coralled rocks. The sea here is of a beautiful bright green, as clear as an Italian lake ; and the mild temperature of the water renders the bathing truly luxurious. All the arrangements are under the direction of government, and everything is therefore carried on in a most orderly manner.

Biarritz is certainly the queen of seaside watering-places. The beauty of its position, the grandeur of its buildings, and the aristocratic character of its patrons combine to place it in the foremost rank ; and the scene presented on a summer afternoon, when the sands, terraces, and promenades are occupied by gaily dressed visitors (the costumes of the gentlemen being in many cases as bright and varied as those of their fair companions), is indeed one of the most brilliant that can be imagined. On the sands, the centres of attraction are the

bathing-establishments — one of them being built in the form of a Swiss chalet, and another in the Moorish style; and these buildings, owing to their bold and picturesque character, contribute greatly to the beauty of the spectacle. Bathers in the most elaborate costumes of every colour and shape are seen smoking, reading, lounging, dipping, or chatting, and even promenading along the sands with other visitors who do not happen to be in bathing-dresses, but who, on account of their different nationalities—French, Spanish, English, German, Turkish, &c.—present almost as great a contrast in their appearance as their friends and acquaintances in undress attire. Such are the characteristic features of Biarritz, a seaside town which manages to flourish without the existence of bathing-machines, donkeys, niggers, mountebanks, and other paraphernalia which are considered indispensable to the wellbeing of an English watering-place.

The fisherwomen near Biarritz are a very peculiar class. They are usually dressed from head to foot in blue serge, without shoes or stockings. They never walk, but are always on the run, balancing their large baskets on their heads, and uttering a curious, prolonged, shrill cry, which once heard can never be forgotten.

The road from Biarritz to Bayonne is rather monotonous, and mostly bordered with poplars. For the first three kilos. the country is flat and sandy; but after joining the main route from Spain, it becomes more undulating. Omnibuses ply between the two places frequently throughout the day; the distance is seven kilometres.

We returned to Bordeaux by a train marked "March." in the time-table, which we supposed meant market-train, running only on market-days. On inquiry we were told that it started every day, and we therefore decided upon going by it. On entering the train, however, no further explanation of the mysterious word was necessary: it was simply a *marchandise*- or goods-train, and took nearly half a day getting to Bordeaux, which is rather more than a hundred miles distant. At Bordeaux we had to remain a couple of hours, imprisoned in the station; but here we met with a privilege which I have never enjoyed out of England, and for which I shall ever feel truly grateful: on the arrival of the train from Bayonne a guard actually allowed us to choose our seats, and leave our luggage in the Paris train before taking us to be locked up.

Our journey to Paris was not a pleasant one.

The carriage was full; and as the day wore on, it became fearfully hot. Our companions were very chatty on the subject of the German war, especially one little old gentleman, who was remarkably energetic in his conversation, and came out with "*Ma foi oui!*" at the end of every sentence. At Angoulême we took up some peasants, who were going to Ruffec harvesting. The carriage was nearly full before; and the prospect of being overcrowded caused us to protest rather warmly against so many passengers entering our carriage; but the guard came up and cut the matter short by saying, in a decisive tone, "*Voyons, foulez dedans;*" and the peasants did so accordingly. The heat now became so oppressive that we mutually left off talking, even the little old gentleman, who had by this time divested himself of all his superabundant clothing, being forced to give in, and to sit still in a corner, confining his remarks to gasping out an occasional "*Ma foi oui!*" On nearing Ruffec our blue-bloused companions began to sing; and what with the heat, the noise, and the closeness of the atmosphere, we found it hardly bearable. Here, however, I discovered a peculiar phenomenon. I found that by looking well into a peasant's face when he was singing, and fixing my eyes steadily upon

him, he immediately lowered his voice, or perhaps left off altogether, although his head wagged about, and his lips still kept moving. I did manage to silence a few opposite me by this method: but they were too many for us; so we had to endure their tremendous harmony about *ce cher Ruffec* and *la patrie*, mingled every now and then with a *Ma foi oui!* from our friend in the corner. At last we were rid of our noisy comrades, who insisted on shaking hands all round before getting out, and we were left in peace. The little old gentleman was much relieved at their departure, and brightened up considerably, repeating his favourite ejaculation over and over again. He then entered into a detail of what kind of refreshment he was going to indulge in when we reached Tours, describing it all with such a relish that it made one feel quite hungry and thirsty. Tickets were now inspected, and we entered a large covered station. A porter opened the door. "*Comment appelle-t-on cet endroit?*" demanded our friend. "Tours," was the reply. Our travelling-companion hastily collected all his clothing, which was lying about in different parts of the carriage, and with an enormous sigh and a parting *Ma foi oui!* descended. We saw no more of him.

It was nearly midnight when we reached Paris, and turned into our comfortable hotel behind the Institute, quite tired out, after a fatiguing railway journey of 30 hours.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

THE Pyrenees present a fine field of operations to tourists. For the paterfamilias there are pleasant spas and watering-places easy of access; there are good roads and pathways for ordinary pedestrians, and there are glaciers and snowy peaks for the more enterprising class of travellers. The mountains, to be sure, are not quite so high as those of Switzerland; but the Maladetta, the Monts Perdus, and the Vignemale, although not so excitingly dangerous to ascend as the Matterhorn or Finster Aarhorn, would no doubt be found sufficiently difficult of access to please most members of the Alpine Club.

Again, many of the sequestered valleys are peculiarly fitted for that set of tourists, of whom we have lately read so much in the contemporary magazines,—those gentlemen who would have us believe that they pass their month's holiday in some secluded little nook with which they flatter themselves they alone *are acquainted*, it being quite outside the pale

of civilization. Here, we are told, they live like hermits, lying on their backs all day smoking cheroots, recovering slowly their exhausted faculties, and resting their shattered frames after the tremendous exertions of the past year. There are in the Pyrenees many spots still unexplored, where these tourists will find their dearest wishes with regard to primitiveness and seclusion anticipated. For myself I dislike nothing more than residing in a fashionable watering-place, where one meets the same people everywhere, and is compelled regularly to go through certain formalities at stated periods; but surely there is some mean between these two extremes!

With the exception of the mountains being less lofty, the Pyrenees may compare very favourably with Switzerland. There are, it is true, no lakes of any extent in the Pyrenees; but the streams and rivulets always flow bright and clear, and have not that dirty, turbid appearance which characterizes those of Switzerland. The Pyrenean valleys are much finer than those of Switzerland; for, being at a lower elevation and in a warmer climate, they are consequently more fertile, and are covered with luxuriant vegetation and gigantic forests. The Pyrenees possess a more varied and richer de-

scription of scenery than Switzerland: the panoramas are constantly changing; craggy rocks, snowy peaks, vast forests, grassy lawns, and wooded glens succeed each other in endless variety. The inhabitants are very intelligent, and we always found them only too delighted to give any information we asked for, and, unlike peasantry generally met with in Switzerland, never expected to be paid for the same.

The points of interest most worthy of a visit by tourists are as follows:—

Col de St. Just.

Val d'Asaspe.

Col des Moines.

Val d'Ossau.

Pic du Midi d'Ossau (ascent from Gabas).

Col de Torte.

Val d'Azun.

Val de Canterets.

Pont d'Espagne and Lac de Gaube.

The Vignemale Glaciers.

Val de Luz.

Pic de Bergons at Luz.

St. Sauveur.

Val de Barèges.

Tourmalet Pass.

Pic du Midi de Bigorre.

Lac Bleu.
Grip Waterfalls.
Col d'Aspin.
Val d'Aure.
Val d'Arragnouet.
Port de Peyresourdes.
Lac d'Oo.
Port de Venasque.
Val d'Héas.
Val de Gavarnie.
Cirque de Gavarnie.
Brèche de Roland.
Penticosa.

By stopping two days at Arreau it is possible to visit Peyresourdes, Lac d'Oo, and the Port de Venasque; or the journey may be prolonged with advantage round the Maladetta. As it would be scarcely possible for anybody to visit the whole of the places above mentioned without having unlimited time and means at his disposal, it is necessary before starting to make a choice according to the tastes and resources of the tourist. For a pedestrian desirous of visiting the West Pyrenees and also of obtaining a glimpse of Spain, there can scarcely be a better route than the one *attempted* by ourselves. This tour takes about four weeks, and includes most of the interesting localities.

It is as follows:—

Names of places.	Days.	Hours of actual walking.
From Bayonne to St. Jean-Pied-de-Port by Cambo or Asparren	2	11
To Mauléon, over Col St. Just	1	9½
To Oléron (diligence), walk thence up Val d'Asaspe to Bédous	1	4
To Eaux Chaudes by Col des Moines.....	1	7½
To Eaux Bonnes	1	1½
To Argelès, over Col de Torte	1	8½
To Caunterets; visit Pont d'Espagne and Lac de Gaube	1	7½
To Luz, St. Sauveur, and Barèges	1	5½
To Ste. Marie, by the Tourmalet, visiting Pic du Midi, Lac Bleu, and Grip waterfalls	1	7½
To Arreau by Col d'Aspin	1	4
To Gèdre by Port de Cambiel (guide) and Val d'Héas	1	10
To Gavarnie and the Cirque	1	3
Over Brèche de Roland to Torta (guide) ..	1	10?
To Penticosa by pass of Bendeneta (guide) ..	1	10?
To Camfranc and Jaca (conveyance)	1	...
To Saragossa (diligence and rail)	1	...
At Saragossa	1	...
To Pampluna (rail)	1	...
To Bayonne or Biarritz	1	...

Allowing two or three days rest on the journey, and six days for going and returning, a month will be quite filled up. According to the above programme, the amount of walking (calculated at the rate of 3½ miles an hour) to be performed each day, although somewhat *great* at the commencement of the journey, can-

not be considered too much. If a shorter tour is desired, it would be better to go from Bordeaux to Pau, then up the Val d'Asaspe or Val d'Ossau, thence to Argellez, &c., and return to Bayonne. If the tourist does not wish to go as far south as Saragossa, he can recross the Pyrenees from Penticosa to Gavarnie or Cauterets in one day. Besides the points of interest above enumerated, there are many other districts, no doubt equally fine, to be explored north, and more especially south, of the range.

The most seasonable time for travelling is August and September; the middle of June is rather too early, as many passes are impracticable at that time of the year. All the roads are well made and furnished with signposts and kilo.-stones; eight kilometres are equal to five miles English.

The inns and hotels are mostly very good, but vary in quality and charges according to the size and character of the place in which they are situated. If a pedestrian travels economically, and does not object to ride third-class on the railway, his expenses for a month are amply covered by £20. The little inns out of the beaten track are very reasonable, while those in the more frequented parts are decidedly the reverse. The heaviest bill we dis-

charged was at the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs at Caunterets; the cheapest account we paid was at the primitive little inn at Arragnouet. At the latter place we were charged 10 sous each for some bread, butter, wine *ad libitum*, and half a pint of *eau de vie* for our flask. This was the most reasonable score I ever remember, excepting perhaps one at an inn in Switzerland, in the village of Flims, in the Vorder-Rhein valley, where the bill for the entertainment and lodging of two persons came only to four francs and a half, including supper, bed, and breakfast. It was a bill similar to the one said to have been presented to an Englishman travelling in Switzerland, who made a rule never to spend less than a hundred francs a day. After passing the night at an inn in a small village, he called for his account, which he found came only to a few francs; and in order to increase the amount, so that it might approach somewhat nearer to his daily expenditure, he forthwith began to damage the furniture and smash all the crockery. Even when he had done his utmost in this direction his bill did not come to half of what he intended it to be; and he had therefore no alternative but to burn the house down.

English is spoken at the larger hotels only.

The peasants of the Basque and Béarnais countries use a *patois* which is totally different from French; but that language is understood in all the villages, and is likewise spoken by many of the inhabitants of North Spain.

A few words before concluding. I am fully aware that there exist better and more complete accounts of the Pyrenees than the one I have sketched in these pages. The country has frequently been traversed by more enterprising travellers than myself; and some parts of the district have been described over and over again by abler and more practised pens than mine. It was not, therefore, my intention to attempt a work which has been done so well already; my object is specially to call the attention of tourists to the Pyrenees as an eligible ground for a holiday tour, and to show how easily, agreeably, and inexpensively such a trip may be made. If my notes are successful in awakening in the mind of the pedestrian a desire to visit this beautiful district, if they are at all instrumental in assisting him to arrange his plans, and if this little book should prove of service to him as an informant or guide, I shall be fully content.

THE END.

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